Men-at-Arms

OSPREY PUBLISHING

The Japanese Army 1931–45 (1)

1931–42

940.
5413

Philip Jowett • Illustrated by Stephen Andrew

PHILIP JOWETT was born in Leeds in 1961, and has been interested in military history for as long as he can remember. His first Osprey book was the ground-breaking Men-at-Arms 306: *Chinese Civil War Armies 1911–49*; he has since published a three-part sequence on *The Italian Army 1940–45* (Men-at-Arms 340, 349 & 353). A rugby league enthusiast and amateur genealogist, he is married and lives in Leeds.

STEPHEN ANDREW was born in 1961 in Glasgow, where he still lives and works. An entirely self-taught artist, he worked in advertising and design agencies before going freelance in 1993. Military history is his passion, and in the past few years he has established himself as a respected artist in this field. Since 1997 he has illustrated half a dozen Men-at-Arms titles including Men-at-Arms 306: *Chinese Civil War Armies 1911–49*, and a five-part sequence on *The German Army 1939–45* (Men-at-Arms 311, 316, 326, 330 & 336).

CONTENTS

THE BACKGROUND, 1894–1931 3
• Japan at war • the Japanese soldier

STRENGTH & ORGANISATION, 1931–45 7
• High command structure
• infantry divisions Types A, B & C
• infantry regiments, battalions & companies
• cavalry brigades • armoured units

CHRONOLOGY, 1931–41 11

THE PACIFIC CAMPAIGN, 1941–42 14
• Chronology, December 1941–June 1942
• The Japanese Army in summer 1942

UNIFORMS, 1931–42 21
• Enlisted men's uniforms, Type 90 (1930) & Type 98 (1938)
• officers' uniforms
• insignia: rank – arm of service – specialist & proficiency badges – armbands
• headgear: peaked service cap – field caps – steel helmets – sun helmets
• footwear: leather ankle boots – *tabi* – officers' footwear

PROTECTIVE & SPECIALIST CLOTHING 36
• Greatcoats • officers' raincoat • mantles
• cold weather clothing: winter surcoat & coat – fur hats – snow camouflage – winter footwear
• specialist clothing: tankers' uniform – anti-chemical protective clothing – working dress

INFANTRY EQUIPMENT 39
• Enlisted men's • officers'

WEAPONS 40
• Small arms • swords • support weapons

THE PLATES 43

INDEX 48

First published in Great Britain in 2002 by Osprey Publishing,
Elms Court, Chapel Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 9LP, United Kingdom.
Email: **info@ospreypublishing.com**

© 2002 Osprey Publishing Ltd.

All rights reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Enquiries should be addressed to the Publishers.

ISBN 1 84176 353 5

Editor: Martin Windrow
Design: Alan Hamp
Index by Alan Rutter
Originated by Magnet Harlequin, Uxbridge, UK
Printed in China through World Print Ltd.

02 03 04 05 06 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

FOR A CATALOGUE OF ALL BOOKS PUBLISHED BY
OSPREY MILITARY AND AVIATION PLEASE CONTACT:
**The Marketing Manager, Osprey Direct UK, PO Box 140,
Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 4ZA, United Kingdom**
Email: **info@ospreydirect.co.uk**

**The Marketing Manager, Osprey Direct USA,
c/o Motorbooks International,
PO Box 1, Osceola, WI 54020-0001, USA**
Email: **info@ospreydirectusa.com**

www.ospreypublishing.com

HIGHLAND
LIBRARIES

103070014

940.5413

Dedication

To my family

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the help of a number of people, and I would like to thank: Stephen Andrew, D.Y. Louie, Gary Nila, Cheyenne Noda, Darko Pavlovic, Bob Rolfe, Robert Stedman, Bill Tagg, Lisa Tomecek, Alfred Weinzierl and Ryuta Chino. Particular thanks go to Richard Fuller and Gerard Gorokhoff for their information on uniforms and insignia, and to Nigel Thomas for his help with the rank charts. George Forty, Gerard Gorokhoff, Philip Pangborn and Martin Windrow are thanked for their generous help with photographs.

Author's Note

The 14-year period covered by the two books in this sequence saw a great deal of change in the Japanese Imperial Army. Although the two books are meant to be of value and interest individually, there is bound to be some overlap between them. I have tried to divide the books chronologically but this has not been possible in all instances. Naval Landing Forces, Parachute Forces and the Military Police (Kempei-tei) will be covered in the forthcoming second book in the sequence, which will also include a select bibliography.

Artist's Note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the Publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:

Stephen Andrew
87 Ellisland, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 2UA, Scotland

The Publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

THE JAPANESE ARMY 1931–45 (1) 1931–42

A *joto-hei* – superior private – of the 49th (Kofu) Infantry Regiment, 1st (Tokyo) Infantry Division of the Japanese Imperial Army, poses in full kit in the early 1930s. He is wearing the old-fashioned peaked (visored) service cap, with the Type 90 (1930) uniform which carries his rank on shoulder bars. The number '49' is worn in brass on both 'swallowtail' collar patches, which are in the red of the infantry. His equipment includes the old hide knapsack which would be phased out in the late 1930s. This crack division was eventually wiped out in New Guinea in 1944. (Gerard Gorokhoff Collection)

THE BACKGROUND, 1894–1931

THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL ARMY was at war continuously for over 14 years, beginning with the invasion of Manchuria in late 1931 and ending with the surrender to the Allies in September 1945. Indeed, some historians might argue that Japan had in one way or another been in conflict since the first Sino-Japanese war of 1894. The victory over the Chinese in this, Japan's first foreign war for centuries, gained her control over Formosa (Taiwan), the Liaotung Peninsula and the Pecadores Islands. These gains were consolidated a few years later when the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy won a bitter campaign against the other imperial power in the region, Tsarist Russia. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 ended in the defeat of the Russian forces on land and sea, and removed any immediate check to Japan's expansion in Asia; and in 1910 she annexed Korea. Her victories over the Russians established Japan – sunk in largely medieval stagnation only half a century earlier – as a new world power which should not be taken lightly.

Japan's limited involvement on the Entente (Allied) side in World War I gained her the former German Pacific colonies in the Marshall, Caroline and Marianas islands, and also a toehold in mainland China. That vast, chaotic country, fragmented between competing warlords, was a constant temptation, and Japan – like the other powers – exploited Chinese weakness to obtain trading concessions which led to *de facto* rule over various enclaves. Under the terms of the Washington Treaty (1922) the USA, Britain, Japan and France were to limit naval shipbuilding and desist from fortifying Pacific colonies; but Japan did not abide by this agreement.

Japan's rapidly expanding population was outstripping her ability to feed them. Her dash for industrialisation demanded raw materials – coal, metals, rubber, and particularly oil – which the home islands could not produce. Trade in these vital commodities with what was termed the 'Southern Resources Area' – basically the European and American colonies in SE Asia and the Pacific – could not be guaranteed in times of international tension or war. A militarist, chauvinistic government took power in Japan, and from 1932 onwards nine out of 11 prime ministers would be military officers. Japan's bellicose attitude would guarantee international tension and consequent trade embargoes, which would further provoke the Japanese government to consider military adventures to seize territory and resources.

During the 1920s Japan built up a great deal of influence over Chang Tso-lin, the Chinese warlord who was the effective ruler of Manchuria. The Japanese supplied Chang with weaponry and military advisors, and in return expected him to support Japanese interests. His defeat by the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek in 1928 quickly led to Chang

Part of a group photo of officers and men of a cavalry unit on service in the puppet state of Manchukuo in the 1930s, wearing the Type 90 uniform with green collar patches bearing a brass unit number, and shoulder bar rank insignia – see Plate A2. The captain (centre) has raised the front of his cap crown, an unofficial style seen in a number of photographs of the period. Note the European-style sabres, *kyu-gunto*. (Philip Pangborn Collection)

Tso-lin's assassination by Japanese agents. His still substantial forces in Manchuria were taken over by his son Chang Hsueh-liang – 'The Young Marshal' – who was expected to become a puppet of Japan interests like his late father. He was required, at the very least, to protect the large Japanese investment in Manchuria. When Chang Hsueh-liang instead pledged his loyalty to the new Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek in Nanking, the Japanese Kwangtung Army began to prepare an invasion of Manchuria.

Conspiracy and political violence were already the norm among Japan's various factions. Acting on their own initiative, a group of officers of the Kwangtung Army exploded a bomb on the Japanese-controlled South Manchurian Railway on the night of 18 September 1931. This incident was blamed on the local Chinese garrison, and was used as a pretext for a Japanese advance into Manchuria. Victory allowed them to create in 1932 the puppet state of Manchukuo under the nominal rule of Pu-Yi, formerly the last emperor of China; and during the 1930s Japan sent some 700,000 colonists and officials to exploit this 'new frontier', which was rich in natural resources and agricultural potential. From Manchuria's long border with China the Japanese Imperial Army looked hungrily at the huge potential spoils to the south, so inadequately protected while Chinese Nationalist and Communist armies struggled against one another.

Japan at war

In the 14 years from September 1931 to September 1945 the Japanese Imperial Army was to see service from the frozen wastes of China and the Aleutians to the tropical forests of Burma and New Guinea. As an instrument of Imperial ambition it conquered huge territories in Asia, and millions of people from China to the far-flung islands of the South Pacific became subjects of the Japanese Empire. The basic motive for this convulsive military effort was to secure by conquest the raw materials which were unavailable on the home islands.

Ostensibly, from December 1941 this military expansion was presented as a liberation of fellow Asians from the yoke of white colonialism, and a benign incorporation into a 'Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere' under the guidance of their 'elder brother' Japan. In practice only the flimsiest pretence of emancipation was tolerated, and large numbers of Japanese functionaries, backed by the army's bayonets, spread out over Asia to govern and plunder without mercy. Japanese troops inflicted great suffering not only on their enemies but also on the populations of conquered nations – and would suffer greatly in their turn.

The Japanese Imperial Army of the 1931–45 period was a strange combination: a well-armed and well-trained modern force, yet imbued with the ancient, introverted traditions of a people who had only emerged from centuries of self-imposed isolation from the modern world less than a hundred years before. The contradictions in Japanese society were mirrored in the Imperial Army, which embraced any new military technology while still clinging to the attitudes of a medieval and essentially feudal society. These contradictions created an army which was an enigma to most foreign observers – fatally misunderstood and underestimated by its potential enemies, but fatally vulnerable to them once it had shown its peculiar weaknesses.

The resourcefulness, aggressive tactics, fanatical bravery and unflinching obedience of the Japanese soldier were to bring this army victory after victory during the war against China in the 1930s, and in the lightning offensives against American, British Commonwealth and Dutch forces in Asia and the Pacific in 1941/42. These human qualities would not, however, prove sufficient when pitted against the industrial might and truly modern military culture of the United States. In retrospect the Japanese Imperial Army was already on the road to defeat even as it won its first spectacular victories in December 1941.

The Japanese soldier

Japanese society had been authoritarian since the earliest times, and liberal democracy, with its emphasis on the rights owed by the group to the individual, was a foreign concept (and one which the regime of the 1930s explicitly held up to contempt as a proof of Western degeneracy). Japan was a 'shame' rather than a 'guilt' society: self-esteem and social approval depended upon conformity and obedience to the group. The masses broadly accepted the cult of emperor-worship – the belief that Japan's monarchs were descended from the sun goddess Amateratsu, and thus enjoyed a sacred legitimacy. The sanction of heaven extended to every instruction of the imperial government, from a ministerial pronouncement to the shouted order of the humblest functionary or army NCO. The regime controlled and manipulated the media and every public expression of opinion, bombarding the population from childhood onwards with ceaseless patriotic propaganda.

Civilians were encouraged and coerced by every means to identify with the national interest, as it was defined by the government; and a complex, overlapping network of social control was exercised at neighbourhood, school, and workplace levels. For deep-seated cultural reasons most Japanese acquiesced with this Orwellian system; the tiny minority who did not (e.g. the small Communist Party, and a few courageous intellectuals) were quickly identified and arrested. Most Japanese lived in poverty in small farming villages or labourers' quarters in the cities, and even at hamlet or city block level any unorthodox opinion or behaviour attracted the attention of official or self-appointed informers.

Such a docile and patriotic society lent itself admirably to the raising of an obedient conscript army. During the pre-war and wartime years every community had a military clerk who kept intrusively thorough records about 200–300 households, forwarding reports to the local military headquarters. At the age of 20 every male was summoned for a medical. In due course, if he

1932: a group of Japanese officers drink to success in their conquest of Manchuria with a cup of *sake*. The officer on the left has the 1930 pattern double-breasted greatcoat, and the man on the right the winter coat. Headgear is a mixture of early type officers' field caps and officers' fur hats. (Peter Newark's Military Pictures)

was passed as fit and depending on his working and family status, he would be called up for two years' active service – most who passed in Class A were assigned to the infantry.

The red call-up paper (*akagami*) was delivered via the local police and the military clerk, often in the early hours of the morning. The conscript's relatives and neighbours would send him off with a blessing, a modest feast, banners and cheers; in wartime he would be presented with a 'thousand-stitch belt' (*sen'inbari*), a sash made by his womenfolk and neighbours which supposedly gave supernatural protection. His family were expected to demonstrate pride at the honour of their son or husband being found worthy to serve the emperor. No show of anxiety over his fate was allowed (or over their own, should he die – the outlook for widows and orphans was grim). The departing conscript was usually reassured by the village mayor that if he fell he would be memorialised at Yasukuni, the national shrine to the war dead in Tokyo. In a sense he was already dead – his life was dedicated to the emperor, whose representatives might choose to spend it as they saw fit. A red sun flag would be flown over his house until he returned – or fell, in which case a black streamer was added. If he died his family might hope to receive a small box supposedly containing his ashes; in fact, during wartime it was often empty, or contained a share of whoever's remains his unit might have hastily cremated if they got the chance.

If a man survived his two years in China or Manchuria, he was demobilised into the reserve and returned home. But until the age of 40 he was liable for recall at need, and it was not uncommon for a man to return to the front for two or three further terms of active service with his regiment, perhaps rising through the NCO ranks as he did so. After the outbreak of the 'Greater East Asia War' in December 1941 men were liable for unlimited recall for the duration (unless they were members of parliament, mayors, village headmen – or local military clerks).

Beyond teaching military skills, the purpose of army training was to instil absolute and unquestioning obedience to superior orders. Discipline was extremely harsh, routinely enforced by brutal beatings, and physical violence was the normal means of punishing a junior throughout a man's service. The new recruit was deliberately bullied, degraded and victimised by his seniors. Even a first class private had to be addressed with a formal show of respect, and the gulf between officers and enlisted men was almost unbridgeable. Seasoned combat NCOs were often humiliated by inexperienced but arrogant junior officers, who enjoyed physical privileges which set them much farther apart from their men than had been tolerated in Western armies for generations past.

The cult of unthinking obedience to the hierarchy and dedication to the nation at whatever cost – the so-called *'Yamato damashii'* or 'Japanese spirit' – was instilled by every means. The concept of the self-sacrificial battle – *gyokusai*, literally 'the crushing of the jewels' – was held up as a model. The extreme expressions of this culture seem to have made an actual virtue of death in battle, as if it were preferable to survival. Another point worth making is that the cult of self-sacrifice brought a certain ambiguity to the army's attitude towards their own casualties, confirmed in a number of memoirs. Provision for evacuating and treating the wounded and sick was poor; under campaign conditions many were abandoned, or died by their own hands or those of medical staff to remove a burden from their comrades. Far fewer men recovered to return to the ranks than was the case among Allied casualties even under the difficult conditions of Asian campaigning.

Given how cheaply Japanese soldiers were encouraged to price their own lives, it is hardly surprising that they held those of foreigners even cheaper. A number of interviewees[1] have confirmed that on arrival with a front line unit in China it was not unusual for a private to be forced to prove his obedience and spirit by killing a bound Chinese prisoner with the bayonet, and for a junior officer to behead one. Encouraged by higher authority, these brutalised soldiers – products of a society which had always preached Japanese racial superiority – treated the civilian populations of conquered territory callously, and often with medieval cruelty. In China the running sore of guerrilla attacks led to an official policy of 'the Three Alls': 'Burn All, Seize All, Kill All'. It is equally unsurprising that China veterans continued to behave in the same way when transferred south to 'liberate' other Asian races – particularly when the failure of their logistic system left them largely dependent on local requisition.

Two Japanese soldiers taking a meal break during the fighting in China in the 1930s have taken off their tunics in the heat. One wears a civilian pullover, and both have 'protective' cotton tabards – the inscriptions on the tabards are from the Lotus Sutra, and ask for Buddha's blessing and the wearer's safekeeping. (Guomindang Party Archives)

Manchuria, 1932: this indifferently mounted officer wears the Type 90 (1930) winter weight uniform, with leather leggings and fur-lined gauntlets. Interestingly, he has a 'death's head' armband on his left sleeve; there does not seem to be any official reference to this, and the symbolism is more Western than Oriental, although sources describe it as belonging to an elite assault unit in Manchuria. Thrust into his belt he has a civilian *wakizashi* short sword. (Peter Newark's Military Pictures)

STRENGTH & ORGANISATION, 1931–45

In 1931 the peacetime strength of the Japanese Imperial Army was 17 divisions with approximately 300,000 men; until that date these numbers had been adequate for its role. Japan's campaign in Manchuria from 1931 onwards called for an expansion of the army to cope with these new demands. By the start of the 'official' outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in September 1937 it had grown to 24 divisions, and by the following year, against a background of heavy fighting over a huge front, it had been expanded to 34 divisions. At the outbreak of the war in the Pacific the Japanese Imperial Army had 51 divisions on strength, of which 27 were tied down in China and 13 were guarding the Mongolian border against a possible Soviet attack. The total forces available for the offensive in the Pacific numbered approximately 400,000 men.

1 E.g. former Lt. Tominaga Shozo of 232nd Inf Regt, 39th (Hiroshima) Div, in Haruka T. & Theodore F.Cook, *Japan at War* (The New Press, NY, 1992)

Manchuria, 1931: a column of Japanese infantry on the march, wearing over their fur caps the second model of steel helmet trialled from 1930, resembling a widened version of the German model – see Plate A3. (Private collection)

Division	...	*Shidan*
Brigade	...	*Ryodan*
Regiment	...	*Rentai*
Battalion	...	*Daitai*
Company	...	*Chutai*
Platoon	...	*Shotai*

High command structure

The emperor was the head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces. In 1926 the throne was inherited by Hirohito, taking the title *Showa* Emperor ('radiant peace'). Under the emperor and exercising actual command came the Imperial General Headquarters, assisted in an advisory capacity by the Supreme Military Council and the Board of Marshals & Admirals. (The parallel but largely nominal authority of the court bureaucracy, the cabinet and the 'diet' or parliament were generally irrelevant, since the military dominated all the agencies of government.)

The chain of command led from the Army Chief-of-Staff at Imperial General Headquarters down to a number of named army groups (e.g. China Expeditionary Army) commanded by a marshal or senior general. The army group consisted of two or more named or numbered 'area armies', each a general's or lieutenant-general's command consisting of two or more numbered armies and, eventually, an air army (e.g. the Central China Front Army, grouping the 11th, 13th and 23rd Armies). The army – in Western terms, a corps – was commanded by a lieutenant-general and grouped two or more divisions (also a lieutenant-general's command) and a number of independent supporting brigades and units. Within a division the infantry group was a major-general's command.

Infantry divisions

The Japanese Imperial Army's infantry divisions fell into three basic categories designated Types A, B and C, of which Type A was 'strengthened', Type B was the 'standard' and Type C was 'special'.

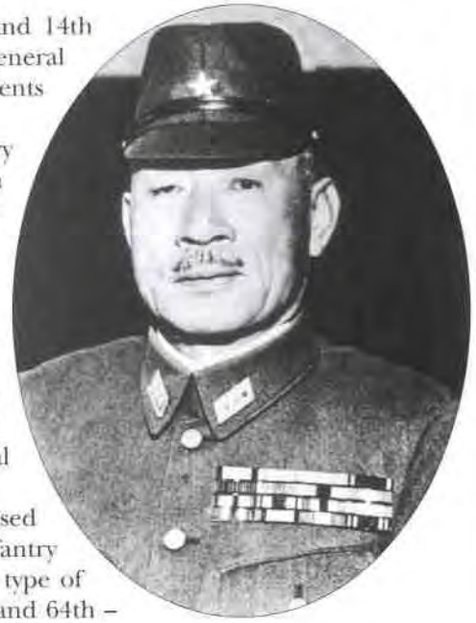
The **Type B division**, adopted as the norm, had three infantry regiments; one each engineer, field artillery, and transport regiments, and a battalion-sized reconnaissance unit; and smaller units of the support branches – signals, medical, ordnance, veterinary, water purification, chemical (anti-gas), etc. There were variations: some had a cavalry rather than a part-mounted, part-motorised reconnaissance unit; some, a tankette company attached to the infantry group in addition to or instead of a recce/cavalry unit; and some, a mountain rather than a field artillery regiment. The make-up of a division was not rigidly permanent, and could sometimes vary over time according to local circumstances.

The numbered division also had a regional designation, and its numbered infantry regiments drew conscripts from designated areas. For example, the 14th (Utsunomiya) Division – which served with 4th Army as part of the Kwangtung Area Army – grouped the 2nd (Mito), 15th (Maebashi), and 59th (Utsunomiya) Infantry Regiments. Supporting units recruited from the whole divisional region and usually, though not always, took the divisional number: e.g. the 14th Div had the 14th Reconnaissance, 20th Field Artillery, 14th Engineer and 14th Transport Regiments. A few formations differed from these general rules, e.g. the 27th 'All Japan' Division, whose infantry regiments were designated 1st, 2nd and 3rd China Regiments.

The **Type A 'strengthened' division** had a larger infantry group, an artillery group (taking the divisional number) with an extra medium regiment of heavy howitzers, and sometimes a battalion-sized divisional tank unit; some divisional elements were weakly motorised. Type A formations seem to have included the 1st, 8th, 10th–12th, 15th, 19th, 20th, 23rd–25th, 28th, 51st and 57th Divisions. For example, the 1st (Tokyo) Div – another 4th Army formation – had the 1st (Tokyo), 49th (Kofu) and 57th (Chiba) Inf Regts; the reconnaissance unit, two-regiment artillery group, divisional tank unit, engineer and transport units all took the divisional number '1st'.

The **Type C 'special' division** was a weak formation composed of two infantry brigades with a total of eight independent infantry battalions, no artillery, and minimal supporting units. This type of division – apparently numbered 58th–70th, minus the 61st and 64th – was used mainly for anti-guerrilla warfare in China. For example, the 69th (Hirosaki) Div consisted of the 82nd–86th and 118th–120th Independent Inf Bns from the Akita, Yamagata and Aomori areas, with 69th Engineer and Transport units.

The basic strengths given below are, of course, the official establishments rather than the actual battlefield strengths on campaign, which varied widely depending upon circumstances:



General (later Field Marshal) Sugiyama, one of the most prominent officers in the Japanese Imperial Army. Commander-in-Chief of the North China (Area) Army in the late 1930s, he served on Emperor Hirohito's Supreme War Council during the war. His uniform is the standard officer's post-1938 type, displaying collar rank patches with the three silver stars on a gold background of *tai-sho*. (US National Archives)

1940 Type B Standard Infantry Division

Total: 20,000 men, 7,500 horses*, including:

3 infantry regts	each 3,845 men
1 field artillery regt.	2,480 men
(or mountain arty regt	3,400 men, 1,400 horses)
1 reconnaissance regt	730 men
(or cavalry regt	950 men, 1,100 horses)
1 engineer regt	900 men
1 transport regt	2,480 men
*(infantry tankette unit**	100 men)

Weapons: 9,000x rifles, 382x light & 112x heavy machine guns, 340x 50mm grenade dischargers; 22x 37mm anti-tank guns, 18x 70mm battalion guns, 12x 75mm regimental guns, 36x 75mm field/mtn guns; 7x armoured cars or tankettes (**plus 10–17 tankettes).

*The infantry regiments had 710 draught/pack horses each, the field artillery regiment 2,000, and the divisional transport regiment 1,300.

Type A Strengthened Infantry Division

Total 29,408 men, 9,906 horses*, 502 motor vehicles*, including:

3 infantry regts	each 5,687 men
1 field artillery regt	2,379 men
(or mountain arty regt	3,400 men, 1,400 horses)
1 medium artillery regt	951 men
1 reconnaissance regt	730 men

(or cavalry regt	950 men, 1,100 horses)
1 tank unit	717 men
1 engineer regt	1,012 men
1 transport regt	2,729 men

Weapons: 10,000x rifles, 405x LMGs, 112x HMGs, 72x AT rifles, 457x grenade dischargers; 40x 37mm AT guns, 36x 70mm battalion guns, 24x 75mm regimental guns, 24x 105mm & 12x 150mm howitzers; 13x armoured cars or tankettes, 20x light tanks, 48x medium tanks.
*The infantry regiments had 1,083 horses each but no motor vehicles; the field artillery regiment 2,463 horses & 49 m/vs; the medium artillery regiment 769 horses but no m/vs; the recce regiment 188 horses & 61 m/vs; the medical unit 1,468 horses but no m/vs; the transport regiment 1,222 horses & 176 m/vs.

Type C Special Infantry Division

Total: 13,000 men, 2,600 horses*, including:

2 infantry brigades	each 4,750 men
1 engineer unit	600 men
1 transport unit	1,800 men

Weapons: 6,950x rifles, 110x LMGs, 32x HMGs, 112x grenade dischargers, 16x light mortars, 8x 70mm battalion guns.
*Each infantry brigade had 500 horses, and the transport unit 1,290.

Infantry regiments, battalions & companies

The standard Type B infantry regiment, commanded by a colonel, comprised a headquarters with regimental baggage train (pack horses and two-wheeled carts); three infantry battalions each of 1,099 men; a signals company, regimental infantry gun (4x 75mm) and anti-tank (6x 37mm) companies, and sometimes a pioneer unit.

The standard battalion, a major's command, had four 181-man rifle companies; a machine gun company (12x HMGs); and a battalion gun platoon (2x 70mm). The rifle company, commanded by a captain or first lieutenant, had three 54-man platoons commanded by second lieutenants, each of four sections – each with an LMG, a grenade discharger and a dozen riflemen.

The 'strengthened' regiment found in Type A divisions differed in having three battalions each of 1,626 men, and a regimental infantry gun battalion (8x 75mm) rather than a company. Within each battalion the rifle companies were 262 strong, sometimes incorporating a heavy weapons platoon (2x HMGs, 2x 20mm AT rifle) and an ammunition platoon. The rifle platoon had 62 men.

China, late 1930s: two officers salute one another during a break from the fighting against the Chinese Nationalists. All of this group are wearing the 1930 summer weight uniform with the standard 1932 steel helmet. The officer in the right foreground has a privately acquired *katana* sword with leather binding on the hilt, and the early model water bottle; the other officer carries one of the later, more rounded bottles. (Richard Fuller Collection)

A sentry stands guard over a gateway in China, dressed for the severe weather in the Type 90 (1930) double-breasted greatcoat with attached hood. This photograph gives a good view of his 6.5mm Arisaka Type 38 (1905) rifle with its long bayonet fixed – the basic personal weapon throughout the war. (US National Archives)

Cavalry brigades

Apart from the cavalry regiment sometimes included in the order of battle of the infantry division, the main cavalry unit encountered was the brigade. Four independent cavalry brigades served exclusively in the Chinese theatre, where the vast distances involved made them essential. The Japanese also recruited local Mongol horsemen into auxiliary units to serve on the Mongolian border, in much the same way that the German Army used Cossacks on the Russian Front from 1942. One small unit – 5th Mounted Recce Bn – was employed outside China, fighting in the Malayan campaign of 1942. The cavalry brigade of between 5,000 and 6,000 men comprised two cavalry regiments of 950–1,200 men, a horse artillery regiment, a tankette unit, and transport, engineer, medical and veterinary units.

Armoured units

Japanese armour was initially quite plentiful, and qualitatively comparable with international standards of the early 1930s. However, tank armour protection and weight of armament were sacrificed for lightness and speed; these weaknesses were starkly demonstrated in battle against the Red Army in the Nomonhan campaign of summer 1939, and tank design would continue to fall behind foreign developments during World War II. However, in 1941/42 the Allied troops who faced Japan lacked sufficient tanks of their own or adequate AT weapons; Japanese crews showed themselves to be notably well trained in fighting at night and in bad weather, and were highly aggressive. Armoured cars and/or tankettes were usually employed in the reconnaissance role, each infantry division having a company. A tank unit was usually included in the Type A infantry divisions, serving in the infantry support role. The conservative Japanese attitude to the employment of armour meant that it was 1942 before the first Armoured Division was formed; four were raised during the war, usually grouping four tank regiments with supporting units including a 'mobile' infantry and a 'mobile' artillery regiment. The tank regiment (*sensha rentai*) had some 800–850 men, 27x light and 48x medium tanks in a headquarters, three tank companies and a supply and services element.

CHRONOLOGY, 1931–DECEMBER 1941

1931

18 September 'Mukden Incident' – plot by officers of Japanese Kwangtung Army to provoke Chinese garrison in Manchuria is launched by dynamiting a stretch of the South Manchuria Railway. The Kwangtung Army has a strength of 10,400 at start of campaign.
19 September Mukden bombed and occupied.

30 September Japan promises League of Nations that it will withdraw from disputed areas.
4 November 'Nonni Bridge Incident' – fighting between Japanese and Chinese troops.
18 November Tsitsihar occupied.
December Invasion of Chinese southern provinces of Manchuria by Kwangtung Army, reinforced to 65,000, quickly leads to Chinese defeat and occupation of the region.

1932

January–May 'First Shanghai Incident' – after air raids, 4 Japanese inf divs and 1 marine bde land in Shanghai to 'protect' their expatriate community, and are resisted by Chinese 19th Route Army.
February Japanese Navy shells Nanking, Nationalist capital. Extended occupation of Manchuria, including previously Russian-dominated areas.
18 March Setting up of puppet state of Manchukuo.

(1932–34)

Resistance to Japanese occupation continues by about 200,000 guerrillas, but 'anti-bandit suppression campaigns' are largely successful by 1934.

1933

24 February Japan rejects international condemnation of her aggression against China and withdraws from League of Nations.
4 March Invasion of Chinese province of Jehol, Inner Mongolia, which is soon incorporated into Manchukuo.

1934

1 March Pu-Yi, deposed Manchu Emperor of China, enthroned as Emperor Kang-Te of Manchukuo.

(1934–37)

Kwangtung Army pursues small-scale campaigns in northern China, Inner Mongolia and Manchuria with intention of destabilising Chinese government.

1935

10 June Chinese Nationalists withdraw troops from Tientsin and Peking at Japanese demand.

1936

15 January Japan declares Washington Treaty void from end of year.
25 November Japan and Germany conclude Anti-Comintern Pact.

1937

7 July **'Marco Polo Bridge Incident' – local clash contrived by Japanese on outskirts of Peking leads to full-scale invasion of unoccupied China.**
30 July Fall of Tientsin.
31 July Fall of Peking.
13 August 'Second Shanghai Incident' – 10,000 Japanese troops land; the fight for the city will last 92 days.

Manchuria, early 1930s: a posed scene of a Japanese patrol apprehending a Chinese guerrilla armed with a pistol in a field of *kaoliang*. All these soldiers are wearing shiny new 'cherry blossom' helmets and 1930 pattern woollen uniforms; at left, note the belt support tab of the tunic buttoned up between the Y-loops of the bayonet scabbard frog. Of particular interest is the early pattern metal body armour worn by these soldiers, fastening behind the back with pale leather cross straps. (Philip Pangborn Collection)

OPPOSITE **Naval Landing Forces men patrol the streets of an occupied Chinese city during the late 1930s in a Type 97 motorcycle/sidecar combination with the decal of the Japanese Imperial Navy on the side, and a Type 11 light machine gun clamped to the bolted-on mount. They wear the open-collar 1937 version of the naval landing uniform (see Plate D3), and the small NLF anchor badge is apparently brazed to the front of their helmets. (Bob Rolfe Collection)**

Kwangtung province, China, 1938: members of the dreaded Japanese military police (*Kempei-tei*) search Chinese civilians. The *Kempei-tei* usually wore cavalry or standard uniforms with the addition of a white armband on the left sleeve bearing two red characters, for 'law' and 'soldier'. They were normally armed with the Type 14 semi-automatic pistol, or sometimes with the obsolete Type 30 (1897) rifle. (Manichi Newspapers)

25 September Chinese defeat Japanese force at Pinghsingkwan, Shansi Province.
5–12 November Fall of Shanghai to Japanese.
8 November Fall of Taiyuan, Shansi Province.
13 December Fall of Nanking, Chinese Nationalist capital. For several weeks the population are then subjected to wanton massacre of military prisoners and civilians, mass rape, etc., recorded by numerous foreign observers. No total figure has been accepted to this day; the lowest Chinese estimate is about 200,000 dead, while a Japanese historian puts it at around 42,000. Some 65 years later, the treatment of the 'Rape of Nanking' in today's Japanese school textbooks is still a major obstacle to Sino-Japanese relations.

1938

February–June Yellow River offensive.
March–April Japanese force of 18,000 defeated, with 16,000 casualties, by Chinese under Gen. Li Tsung-jen at Taierchuang, Shantung Province, but Japanese go on to capture coastal cities of Amoy and Foochow.
May Fall of Swatow to Japanese.
10 June Japanese Central China Army launches major offensive towards Hankow, Nationalist temporary capital.
July–August 'Changkufeng Incident' – fighting on border of Manchukuo & Outer Mongolia between Kwangtung Army and Soviet forces ends in stalemate.

21 & 25 October Fall of Canton and Wuhan to Japanese.

1939

27 March Capture of Nanchang.
May–September 'Nomonhan (Khalkyn Gol) Incident' – Japanese/Soviet campaign over disputed territory along the Khalka River. *May* Offensive by 23rd Div of Kwangtung Army initially successful; *August* counter-offensive by Soviet Far Eastern Army, spearheaded by Gen. Zhukov's tank units, leads to major Japanese defeat – approx.8,500 Japanese

Northern China, 1937: a unit of Japanese infantry perform a celebratory *'Banzai!'* after a local victory. The cheer – in full, *'Tenno Haika banzai!'*, 'May the Emperor live for 10,000 years!' – demonstrated the soldiers' devotion to Emperor Hirohito. All are wearing the 1930 uniform with the standard 1932 model steel helmet. Most are armed with the Arisaka Type 38 rifle, but the man at far left has a Type 11 LMG, and at top right we can just see a 50mm grenade launcher, either the early Type 10 (1921) or its improved replacement Type 89 (1929). These were the two standard support weapons at infantry section level. (Imperial War Museum, London, NYT 70962)

killed and similar number wounded out of force of 56,000 men.

30 September Chinese victory at Changsha leads to Japanese withdrawal from Hunan Province.

1940

May Renewed Japanese offensive in Hupeh Province towards Nationalist capital at Chungking, Szechwan Province.

July After 20,000 casualties in Hupeh campaign, Japan calls up a million men. Massive reinforcement of Kwangtung Army follows.

September Following fall of France to Germany in June, Japanese pressure colonial government of French Indo-China (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) to allow their forces to set up bases, providing strategic airfields and closing one of China's supply routes.

25 September Japanese 5th Div march into Hanoi, N.Vietnam.

27 September Tripartite Pact of military co-operation signed between Japan, Germany and Italy.

1941

2 April Chinese victory at Shangkao.

13 April Japan concludes neutrality pact with USSR.

21 April Foochow, Fukien Province, fall to Japanese.

1 August Japanese occupy Saigon, S.Vietnam.

September Second battle of Changsha, Hunan Province, ends in Chinese victory.

16 October Lt.Gen. Tojo Hideki appointed prime minister, army minister and home minister of Japanese government.

7 December **Japanese naval air attack on US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, brings the USA into World War II and opens the Pacific Campaign.**

By this date, nearly 300,000 Japanese had already died on active service since the 'China Incident' – the Japanese term for this vast campaign – officially began in July 1937. About one million Japanese troops would remain tied down in China, and this front would cost a total of some 400,000 Japanese dead by VJ-Day.

PACIFIC CAMPAIGN, 1941–42

Pressure on the Japanese to stop their aggression in China was applied through a series of economic embargoes imposed by the USA in late 1940–early 1941, on the export of iron ore, copper, nickel, and other materials including those used for oil drilling. These sanctions failed to persuade Japan to make peace with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government, and international pressure was increased by a creeping oil embargo imposed during the summer of 1941. Oil supplies were gradually reduced over a few months before the embargo was officially endorsed by the US government on 5 September. With no domestic sources of oil, it was now only a matter of time before the Japanese Empire would be forced to act. Plans were agreed at an Imperial Conference on 6 September for an invasion of the Dutch East Indies to secure its vital oilfields and other natural resources. All the other conquests in SE Asia were planned with the main aim of securing safe routes to and from the East Indies.

The basic plan was for Gen. Yamashita's 25th Army to invade Malaya in the north and to advance down the peninsula to neutralise the vital British naval base of Singapore at its southern tip. At the same time, to seize Burma as a buffer between the Japanese and British India, Gen. Iida's 15th Army would invade that country from their new bases in Siam (Thailand). Elements of the 23rd Army would seize the British enclave of Hong Kong on the Chinese coast, defended by a 14,000-man Anglo-Canadian garrison. The Philippines were to be invaded by Gen. Homma's 14th Army, eradicating US land forces in the Pacific. An attack on the Dutch East Indies could then be launched by a force built around

Table 1: Japanese Army in China & Manchukuo, 7 December 1941

Key:

IR = Infantry Regts	C = Cavalry unit
R = Reconnaissance Regt	T = Tank unit
Tkt = Tankette company	FA = Field Artillery Regt
MA = Mountain Arty Regt	AG = Artillery Group (Type A divs)

Kwangtung (Area) Army – Manchukuo

3rd Army
9th Inf Div (7, 19, 35 IRs; 9 C, 9 MA of 9 AG)
12th Inf Div (24, 46, 48 IRs; 12 R, 12 T, 24 FA of 12 AG)
Plus 4 brigades, and detachments.

4th Army
1st Inf Div (1, 49, 57 IRs; 1 R, 1 T, 1 FA of 1 AG)
14th Inf Div (2, 15, 59 IRs; 14 R, 20 FA)
57th Inf Div (52, 117, 132 IRs; 57 R, 57 FA of 57 AG)
plus 5 brigades, and detachments.

5th Army
11th Inf Div (12, 43, 44 IRs; 11 C, 11 MA of 11 AG)
24th Inf Div (22, 32, 89 IRs; 24 R, 42 FA of 24 AG)
plus 4 brigades, and detachments.

6th Army
23rd Inf Div (64, 71, 72 IRs; 23 R, 23 T, 13 FA of 23 AG)
plus 1 brigade.

20th Army
8th Inf Div (5, 17, 31 IRs; 8 R, 8 T Co, 8 FA of 8 AG)
25th Inf Div (14, 40, 70 IRs; 75 C, 15 MA of 25 AG)
plus 4 brigades, and detachments.

Reserve
10th Inf Div (10, 39, 63 IRs; 10 R, 10 FA of 10 AG)
28th Inf Div (3, 30, 36 IRs; 28 C, 28 MA of 28 AG)
29th Inf Div (18, 38, 50 IRs; 29 C, 29 MA)
plus 1 brigade, and
4th, 5th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th & 13th Tank Regts.

Defence Command
5 brigades of militia.

North China Front (Area) Army – Peking

1st Army – Taiyuan
36th Inf Div (222, 223, 224 IRs; Tkt, 36 MA)
37th Inf Div (225, 226, 227 IRs; Tkt, 37 MA)
41st Inf Div (237, 238, 239 IRs; 41 MA)
plus 3 brigades, and detachments.

12th Army – Tsinan
17th Inf Div (53, 54, 81 IRs; Tkt, 23 FA)
32nd Inf Div (210, 211, 212 IRs; Tkt, 32 FA)
plus 3 brigades, and detachments.

Inner Mongolian Garrison Army
26th Inf Div (11, 12, 13 Independent IRs; 26 R, 11 Ind FA)
Cavalry Group
plus 1 brigade.

Reserve
27th Inf Div (1, 2, 3 China IRs; 27 R, 27 MA)
35th Inf Div (219, 220, 221 IRs; Tkt, 35 MA)
110th Inf Div (110, 139, 163 IRs; 110 C, 110 FA)
plus 5 brigades, and detachments; and
8th Tank Regt.

Central China Front (Area) Army – Shanghai

11th Army – Hankow
3rd Inf Div (3, 64, 68 IRs; 3 C, 3 FA)
6th Inf Div (13, 23, 45 IRs; 6 C, 6 FA)
13th Inf Div (116, 65, 104 IRs; 13 C, 19 MA)
34th Inf Div (216, 217, 218 IRs; 34 R, 34 FA)
39th Inf Div (231, 232, 233 IRs; 39 R, 39 FA)
40th Inf Div (234, 235, 236 IRs; 40 C, 40 MA)
plus 2 brigades, and detachments.

13th Army – Shanghai
15th Inf Div (51, 60, 67 IRs; T, 21 FA)
22nd Inf Div (84, 85, 86 IRs; Tkt, 52 MA)
116th Inf Div (109, 120, 133 IRs; 120 C, 122 FA)
plus 5 brigades, and detachments.

23rd Army – Canton
38th Inf Div (228, 229, 230 IRs; Tkt, 38 MA)
51st Inf Div (66, 102, 115 IRs; 51 R, 14 FA)
104th Inf Div (108, 137, 161 IRs; 104 C, 104 FA)
plus 1 brigade.

Reserve
4th Inf Div (8, 37, 61 IRs; 4 R, 4 FA)
3rd and 7th Tank Regts.

South China Front (Area) Army – Canton

21st Army – Canton
Kanoye Inf Div (?)
plus 1 brigade.

the 2nd Inf Div from 16th Army; this would be reinforced by the 38th and 48th Inf Divs withdrawn from Hong Kong and the Philippines respectively. With Singapore secured, elements of the 25th Army from Malaya (including the 2nd Tank Regt) would also be switched to complete the conquest of the Dutch East Indies.

CHRONOLOGY, December 1941–June 1942

General overview

1941

7 December Attack on US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, is followed by Japanese declaration of war against the USA and Great Britain and the launching of attacks across the Pacific.
8 December Japanese begin air attacks on Guam, Midway and Wake Islands, Hong Kong and the Philippines, and make first advances into Malaya.
9 December Tarawa and Makin Islands invaded.
10 December British battleships HMS *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* sunk by Japanese aircraft off Malayan coast.
14 December Thailand declares alliance with Japan.
23 December Japanese capture Wake Island.
25 December Hong Kong falls.

1942

19 January British Borneo surrenders.
23 January Japanese invade New Britain, New Ireland and Solomon Islands.
19 February Portuguese Timor invaded.
23 March Andaman and Nicobar Islands fall to Japanese.
4 June US naval victory at Battle of Midway cripples Japanese carrier force in Central Pacific.
13 & 21 June Japanese occupy islands of Attu & Kiska in Aleutians group off coast of Alaska.

Invasion of Malaya

1941

8 December Japanese forces land at Kota Bharu, NE Malaya, as diversion to mask landing of main force further north-west at Singora and Patani, Thailand. (Supposed to coincide with raid on Pearl Harbor, the attack is mistakenly launched two hours earlier.)

Japanese soldiers advance down the coast of Malaya in early 1942 riding the form of transport particularly associated with that campaign. The Japanese Army's ability to adapt to any situation they faced and to use any form of transport, including issued or commandeered bicycles, played an important part in their success. The men are all wearing the early pattern cork sun helmet and are in shirtsleeve order, with much of their gear stowed on their bikes – see Plate G3. (Robert Hunt Library)

The mainly Australian and Indian troops in Malaya total 120,000 men, nearly twice the strength of the 70,000-man invasion force – but with only half the tanks and artillery, few AT weapons and very weak air cover. British Commonwealth troops will be repeatedly outflanked by audacious Japanese advances through the forest terrain.
16 December Fall of Penang.

Gen. Yamashita Tomoyuki, commanding 25th Army, holds an impromptu staff meeting during the 1942 Malayan campaign. Yamashita (seated, centre) wears a tropical uniform with his rank displayed on the upper collar, an open-collar shirt, and high black leather boots. His officers are wearing an interesting mix of uniform types. The man at far left has a first type cork sun helmet; the other officers wear a mixture of steel helmets, with or without camouflage netting, and standard field caps.

Yamashita's stunning victory earned him the nickname 'the Tiger of Malaya', and he went on to command 1st Army in Manchuria. He was appointed commander-in-chief in the Philippines in 1944, where his troops mounted a fanatically stubborn defence until 25 August – eleven days after Japan's surrender. Held responsible for atrocities committed by his troops in Manila, Yamashita was tried for war crimes and hanged in February 1946. (Japan War History Office)

1942

5 January Further Japanese landings on west coast outflank Slim River defenders.
7–8 January Japanese tanks break through defences north of main supply base of Kuala Lumpur.
11 January Kuala Lumpur abandoned.
22 January British & Commonwealth reinforcements land at Singapore, but have no time to deploy.
30 January Having suffered about 25,000 casualties including some 9,000 killed, Commonwealth forces withdraw across Johore causeway from Malaya onto Singapore island. From defences which face the sea rather than the mainland, 85,000 ill-armed Commonwealth troops under Gen. Percival face – ignorant of their numbers – Gen. Yamashita's Japanese force of only 30,000.
15 February ('Black Sunday') In the greatest military defeat suffered by the British Empire, Singapore surrenders and the garrison pass into captivity.

Invasion of Burma

1942

15 January Japanese cross from Thailand into far south and begin advance up Kra Isthmus. British & Indian garrison numbers less than two weakly supported divisions with fewer than 40 obsolete aircraft; initial Japanese strength is about 35,400 men.
20 January Japanese 55th Div advances from Raheng, Thailand, towards Moulmein.
30 January Moulmein falls.
11 February Japanese cross Salween River, forcing defenders to withdraw towards Sittang River.
17–19 February After strong initial resistance on Sittang River, many Commonwealth troops are trapped by premature destruction of bridge.
8 March Japanese capture the capital, Rangoon. Commonwealth troops hold Irrawaddy and upper Sittang valleys, Chinese troops under Gen. Stilwell, Mandalay and Toungoo.
30 March Chinese abandon Toungoo. Two-pronged Japanese advance continues northwards up both river valleys.
3 April Last surviving British aircraft withdrawn to India.
12 April Japanese take Miguangye, threatening oilfields.
29 April Japanese seize Lashio, cutting Burma Road supply route to China.
1 May Mandalay abandoned.
8 May Fall of Myitkyina.
10 May Rearguard battle at Kalewa covers Commonwealth retreat across Chindwin River.
12 May Monsoon rains slow Japanese pursuit.
20 May After a 900-mile retreat north-westwards into India, and 13,000 casualties, the last of the Commonwealth forces leave Burma.

Invasion of the Philippines

1941

7 December US Far East Air Force on Luzon island largely destroyed by Japanese air attacks.

An infantry unit prepare to board a convoy of Nissan 80 trucks during the 1942 offensive in the Pacific. All the officers and men are wearing tropical uniforms, many of them in shirtsleeves, and the second pattern cork sun helmet. Motor transport was always in short supply, but when available it was always used to keep up the momentum of advance. (George Forty Collection)

10 & 12 December First of 57,000 Japanese troops land in far north and south of Luzon. Gen. MacArthur has garrison of one US and nine Filipino divisions, but only US troops are properly trained and armed.
22 December Main Japanese force lands in Lingayen Gulf, NW Luzon, and drives south.
24 December Japanese landings in Lamon Bayon east coast threaten the capital, Manila. Rapid advances force Gen. MacArthur to withdraw US/Filipino forces towards a final defensive redoubt on the Bataan peninsula.

1942
2 January Japanese occupy Manila.
22 January Final Allied withdrawal into Bataan defences.
February Allies resist enemy attacks in bitter defensive fighting. Weakness of Japanese logistics exposed.
2 March Japanese land on island of Mindanao.
11 March Gen. MacArthur leaves by sea, on orders from Washington; Gen. Wainwright continues defence of Bataan, and Corregidor fortress in Manila Bay.
3 April Reinforced Japanese forces begin major offensive into Bataan peninsula.
9 April Surrender of Bataan with 35,000 US & 41,000 Filipino troops.
10 April Japanese land on Cebu island.
6 May Fall of Corregidor.
9 May Japanese landings on west coast of Mindanao end last Allied resistance in the Philippines.

Invasion of Dutch East Indies

1942
11 January Japan declares war on Netherlands and immediately invades northern Celebes, Dutch East Indies. Dutch garrisons total 120,000 men, but widely dispersed and lacking air cover.
23–24 January Further Japanese landings in NW and SE Celebes.
14 February Airborne attack by Japanese Army paratroopers on Palembang oil refinery, Sumatra. Seaborne landings in Sumatra.
27 February Inter-Allied naval squadron destroyed in Battle of the Java Sea, sealing fate of DEI garrison.
28 February Japanese landings on Java.
8 March Dutch Gen. Ter Poorten surrenders 93,000 men, followed a few days later by 5,000 Allied troops.
1 April Japanese forces land on Dutch New Guinea.

The Japanese Army in summer 1942

By the end of the lightning offensive in the Pacific the Japanese soldier had gained a reputation as a magnificent (some thought, an invincible) jungle fighter who adapted superbly to every obstacle and difficulty. The confidence of the Japanese themselves was perhaps best summed up by Col. Tsuji in Malaya: 'On average our troops had fought two battles, repaired four or five bridges, and advanced 20 kilometres every day'. Although it was certainly true that the seasoned divisions had performed impressively, often against numerically superior opponents, their victories had been won over enemies who suffered from specific weaknesses which would not necessarily persist.

In this first campaign the Japanese tactical doctrine had proved highly successful. It was based on simple planning, but maximum flexibility, maintained by commanders who led from well forward; on ceaseless offensive pressure, irrespective of losses; on fast movement through even the most marginal terrain, and on opportunistic infiltration. The enveloping attack was the classic engagement, with mixed-arms columns advancing on parallel axes. One force sought to pin the enemy down by a determined frontal attack, often launched with inadequate reconnaissance and against superior numbers; meanwhile others – often in greater strength – outflanked and enveloped the defenders. Reconnaissance units would identify suitable targets for the following tanks; tanks, artillery and aircraft would seek to blast paths for the infantry who followed close behind in strength; infantry training stressed the importance of getting to close quarters quickly, keeping the machine guns well forward, and assaulting with the bayonet. Thorough training in night fighting multiplied the impact of such attacks; and local victories were exploited with great determination, without waiting for the 'rear echelons' to catch up.

These tactics were applied by hardened veterans against – usually – inexperienced troops who might be confused and exhausted by unfamiliar terrain and climate; who were disheartened by earlier setbacks and constant retreats, short of supporting armour, artillery and anti-tank weapons, and – crucially – who almost completely lacked air support. In these circumstances Japanese tactics proved devastating; but when the Japanese did not enjoy such advantages, they could be suicidal. The limitations of this doctrine of the offensive at all costs would be cruelly demonstrated in the coming years, when the material balance had shifted and the changing fortunes of war threw most Japanese soldiers onto the defensive.

Although on paper the Japanese Imperial Army was an impressive force, its best troops were concentrated in a few 'crack' divisions. A handful of these divisions were committed to the Pacific offensive on successive fronts; as soon as victory was assured on one they were transferred to the next, and operations during this 'lightning' offensive had in fact stalled on a number of occasions while reinforcements were brought

February 1942: looking weary but happy, Japanese infantrymen march down the street in newly occupied Singapore. Most wear the tropical shirt; the man in the centre has gone one step further by stripping to his undershirt. Although such informality might have been tolerated at such a triumphant moment, his NCO would probably have told him to smarten up in future, emphasising the order with a punch or kick. (Robert Hunt Library)

The Philippines, spring 1942: men of the Naval Landing Forces observe the bombardment of the US forces as they retire into the Bataan peninsula north of Manila Bay. They wear the 'sea green' NLF uniform – see Plate D3 – with canvas helmet covers. The nearest man, a bugler, displays the crossed anchors rank patch of a seaman second class on his right sleeve. The Imperial Navy flag, with the sun off-set towards the hoist side, has a golden sphere finial. (Robert Hunt Library)

from other battle zones. For example, the 5th Inf Div had served in China for three years from July 1937 to August 1940. It then spent seven months in French Indo-China before taking part in the Chekiang landings in China in April 1941. The 5th was one of the main formations deployed for the invasion of Malaya in December 1941; after the fall of Singapore it was moved to Dutch New Guinea, where it continued to serve until 1944. Naval and air superiority had made such risky tactics possible in 1941/42; but those advantages would soon disappear forever.

The end of the Japanese offensive in SE Asia left the empire with a huge area of newly conquered territories. However, apart from the precious raw materials she had captured, Japan's interest in her new southern empire was still secondary to her main priority, which remained the war in China, where the vast distances and dispersed enemy armies were still swallowing up most of her resources of equipment and manpower. For this reason projects to invade Ceylon and possibly even Australia were abandoned, and a policy of defensive consolidation was adopted.

The army's conquests had left it hugely over-extended at the end of long, vulnerable supply lines (the naval base at Truk in the Caroline Islands was 2,340 miles from Tokyo, and Singapore 3,490 miles). The Japanese logistical system was inadequate – even primitive – at every level, but the high command's plans to defend this vast perimeter seem to have taken no account of the fact. This logistical weakness had already begun to show during the Philippines invasion; the vast distances involved, and the loss of command of the air and sea, would soon aggravate that weakness drastically. Japan quickly proved unable to supply and reinforce her distant garrisons; and the effects of strategic shortages of all kinds were being felt by the home population as early as 1942.

Japanese landings were made on the coast of New Guinea and smaller islands to try to cut Australia off from Great Britain and the Middle East. It was in this region that the Allied counter-offensive to destroy the Japanese Empire was to begin, with the landings on Guadalcanal in the Solomons in August 1942. Within a few months of Japan's triumphs the US Navy had blocked her onslaught in the Battle of the Coral Sea on 7–8 May 1942, and robbed her of the strategic initiative by destroying most of her carrier fleet at Midway on 4 June.

Japan simply lacked the industrial base to keep her expanded armed forces equipped and to replace combat losses (for example, even in 1941 America's aircraft production figures were four times greater than Japan's, and the gap would widen steadily). The astonishing industrial potential of the United States soon outclassed Japan both quantitatively and qualitatively. By the end of 1942 the scale and quality of American armaments production, and the numbers of men, aircraft and ships which the US forces could project far from their own shores, were beginning to break the myth of Japanese invincibility which had briefly paralysed Allied forces at the beginning of that year.

Nevertheless, due largely to the extraordinary determination of the Japanese soldier, it would take three more years of savage and costly fighting to bring down the Empire of Japan in final defeat.

Table 2: Japanese Army, Pacific Theatre, 1941–42

Key:

IR = Infantry Regts	C = Cavalry unit
R = Reconnaissance Regt	T = Tank unit
Tkt = Tankette company	FA = Field Artillery Regt
MA = Mountain Arty Regt	AG = Artillery Group (Type A divs)

25th Army – Malaya
Imperial Guard Div (1, 2, 6 or 7? GIRs; 1 GC; 1 GFA)
5th Inf Div (11, 21, 42 IRs; 5 R, 5 FA)
18th Inf Div (55, 56, 114 IRs; 22 C, 18 MA)
56th Inf Div (113, 146, 148 IRs; 56 R + Tkt, 56 FA)
1st, 6th & 14th Tank Regts;
2nd Tank Regt (later transferred to Dutch East Indies).

15th Army – Burma
33rd Inf Div (213, 214, 215 IRs; ? R, 33 MA)
55th Inf Div (112, 143, 144 IRs; 55 C, 55 MA)

14th Army – Philippines
16th Inf Div (9, 20, 33 IRs; 16 R, 22 FA)
48th Inf Div (1 & 2 Formosa, 47 IRs; 48 R, 48 MA)
4th & 7th Tank Regts.

16th Army – Dutch East Indies
2nd Inf Div (4, 16, 29 IRs; 2 R, 2 FA of 2 AG)
(joined later by 38th & 48th Inf Divs – see Table 1 – and 2nd Tank Regt).

Reserve
21st Inf Div (62, 82, 83 IRs; Tkt, 51 MA)

UNIFORMS, 1931–42

Enlisted ranks' uniforms:
The uniform of the Japanese Imperial Army had developed over a period of about 30 years and incorporated lessons learned during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05. Khaki – in the European usage, meaning a medium shade of drab brown – had been standardised by the time of the brief Japanese participation in World War I, and in fact the Japanese Army which first went into action in Manchuria in 1931 wore a uniform which had changed little since 1918. From the start the Japanese had a practical approach to the design of the uniform worn by their soldiers; smartness was less of a priority than a functional uniform which protected the soldier in all conditions. For instance, in 1914 Japan was the first country to provide its soldiers with both a thick woollen greatcoat and a raincoat, which kept the soldier both warm and dry. The fact that the Japanese Army had seen service for a number of years on the Chinese mainland meant that it was fully prepared for the conditions faced in Manchuria in 1931.

The 1930 (Type 90) issue uniform
The uniform worn during the first seven years of the Chinese campaign was introduced shortly before its commencement. The 1930 pattern uniform was issued in winter and summer versions and consisted of a tunic, trousers and woollen puttees all in a mustard-khaki colour, worn with the peaked (visored) cap. The winter version of the 1930 pattern was made from a heavy woollen cloth, the summer version from a light cotton.

The **Type 90 tunic** in both winter and summer versions was of the same basic design, with a stiff stand collar, five brass front buttons, two breast and two waist pockets. Pockets were of the internal type with only the flaps showing; these were shaped to a point in the middle and fastened by a brass button. Some examples of the tunic had breast pockets only, but the reason for this is not known.

The **trousers** worn with both the Type 90 and later Type 98 (1938 pattern) uniforms were half-breeches or pantaloons which fastened at the ankles with either buttons, laces or press studs. The trousers were worn in various styles, from a

loose 'jodhpur' shape to a tighter 'plus-four' style, their tightness depending on how they were tucked into the khaki woollen **puttees**. These latter were wrapped around the leg and then fastened with tapes just below the knee. To help secure the puttees canvas straps were wrapped over them, usually in a criss-cross pattern which gave the characteristic 'X' shape at the front.

This *itto-hei* – private first class – wears the transitional tunic during the change-over from the Type 90 to Type 98 uniform; his stand-collar 1930 tunic has his red rank bars with two yellow stars reduced in size and moved from the shoulders to the collar. The field cap was to remain virtually unchanged; note the characteristic Y-shaped front and crown seams of what was effectively a 'visored sidecap'. He is wearing a white armband with black characters; this shows that he has official permission to be on leave. If the armband had two red stripes through the centre it would show that he was 'on leave with a car', and one red stripe would indicate 'on leave with a horse'. (Gerard Gorokhoff Collection)

The 1938 (Type 98) issue uniform

The introduction of the new Type 98 dress regulations meant the wholesale replacement of the 1930 uniform with the new model. While this was taking place the Type 90 tunic was usually adapted to conform with the new regulations. The main characteristic of this **transitional tunic** was the shifting of the rank bars from the shoulders to the old high collar – the fixing loops on the shoulders were usually left in place. Photographs of the time show some fairly makeshift attempts at this adaptation, which seems to have been undertaken by the individual soldier or a locally employed seamstress.

The **Type 98 tunic** was made from the same winter and summer materials as the Type 90, with the same five front buttons and four concealed pockets with buttoned external flaps, but had a stand-and-fall collar. The summer version of the 1938 tunic was incorporated with other uniform items into a tropical uniform (which is covered in the forthcoming second MAA book in this sequence). The colour of the cloth used for both weights of uniform varied greatly, and it is difficult to describe a standard shade. Uniforms were often manufactured on a local basis and such colour variations were bound to result from differences in the exact materials and dyes used.

Officers' Type 90 & Type 98 uniforms

As in most other contemporary armies, Japanese Army officers were expected to procure their own uniforms from commercial tailors. Though obviously made to a regulation basic design, details of colour, material and quality thus varied widely depending upon the maker and the individual's means. One difference between the 1930 pattern enlisted man's and officer's tunic was that the stiff collar was slightly higher on the latter. As part of the **1938 pattern field uniform** Japanese officers usually wore a superior quality version of the enlisted ranks' semi-breeches, with either leather leggings or puttees. Some officers chose to wear flared riding breeches instead of the standard trousers, with high leather boots. The breeches were held up by braces which crossed at the back, adjusted by means of a cloth half-belt at the back, and fastened at the ankle by four small buttons.

The Japanese officer's **Type 90 (1930) service dress** consisted of a five-button, high-collared tunic worn with a pair of straight-cut trousers, a peaked cap and brown leather shoes. General officers had plain collars; those of more junior

China, 1940: three Japanese sentries pose on top of their pillbox, guarding the Chenju wireless station about 30 miles from Shanghai. All are wearing the Type 98 (1938) uniform; under magnification the inverted W-shaped 'chevron' in arm-of-service colour can be seen above the right breast pocket of the man on the left. Their cork sun helmets are the enlisted ranks' version of the second model topi – the most common type. They are wearing only the most basic of belt kit for guard duty. (Robert Hunt Library)

rank displayed their branch colour on the 'swallowtail' patches. Temporary duty appointments were indicated by sashes worn across the chest – e.g. a red sash with two white stripes and red tassels identified the unit adjutant, and a yellow sash with two white stripes the duty officer of the week.

The main change from the officer's Type 90 to **Type 98 (1938) service dress** was in the tunic collar, which was now a stand-and-fall type. Ranks were uniquely worn on both the collar and on the shoulder by means of gold wire epaulettes with a system of silver stars mounted on them. On **field dress** rank was worn only on the turn-down collar.

INSIGNIA ON 1930 & 1938 UNIFORMS

The **Type 90 (1930) uniform** continued to show the **rank** of the Japanese soldier by a system of yellow metal stars on red cloth bars – for all branches of service – which were fastened transversely by loops to the outer shoulders of the tunic and greatcoat (see chart on page 34). The cloth bars were officially 90mm long x 30mm wide.

On the front of each side of the stiff tunic collar were attached collar patches cut to a square edge at the front and a 'swallowtail' at the outside or rear. These patches were in the colour of the wearer's **arm or branch of service**; there is a certain amount of confusion as to the exact colours in some sources, but a reliable Japanese source states that they were: infantry = red; cavalry = green; artillery = yellow; engineers = brown; medical = dark green; veterinary = purple; military bandsmen = navy blue; transport = dark blue; military police = black; Army Air Force = light blue; judiciary = white; quartermasters or intendance = silver-grey.

These patches bore brass numerals and symbols indicating the wearer's **unit**. Although complicated, the system was basically as follows: plain patches = unattached soldier; matching Arabic numerals = regular regiment; Arabic numerals with line underneath = reserve regiment; Roman numerals on right patch, matching Arabic numerals on left = regiment stationed in Korea or Formosa; Arabic numeral with 'D' = divisional unit; arm-of-service badge on right patch, Arabic numeral on left = specialist unit within a larger formation.

On the **Type 98 (1938) uniform rank insignia** were displayed on both sides of the stand-and-fall collar, the designs being unchanged but the size of the bars officially being reduced to 40mm x 18mm. As war shortages began to bite their dimensions were slightly further reduced to try to save precious cloth.

On service dress NCOs and privates had plain khaki shoulder straps bearing the same system of gold stars as appeared on the collar bars; NCOs had a gold stripe at the shoulder end of the strap.

With the removal of the **branch-coloured patches** from the collar, their function was officially taken over by a coloured cloth 'chevron' in the shape of an inverted 'W' worn above the right breast pocket. This was

not, however, a universal feature; and by 1940 it was almost completely discontinued, although some of the support branches – e.g. medical corps – continued to wear them until the end of the war. This was presumably because it was more important that doctors and other specialist personnel be easily identifiable. In 1941 new regulations called for some branches of service to be shown by a small strip of appropriately coloured cloth under the collar rank bar, these being confined to engineer, veterinary, military band, accountant and medical personnel. Photographic evidence seems to suggest that this new system was rarely used, however, and if any display of branch colour was worn then it was usually the older 'W'-chevron.

This sergeant is an officer candidate, as shown by the circular badge with a central star worn on the collar of his 1938 tunic in place of the rank bars – interestingly, these are still worn on the shoulders. He is wearing the first type of cork sun helmet with a gold star badge pinned to the front; and his high boots would be brown instead of officers' black. His *shin-gunto* sword is worn in a metal scabbard with a protective leather cover. (Cheyenne Noda)

Arm of service badges

A system of small yellow metal badges were worn on the collars of both the 1930 and 1938 uniforms to show the branch of the wearer. On the 1930 uniform these were worn on the right collar patch with the unit number in Arabic numerals on the left patch. On the 1938 uniform the badge was worn behind (i.e. to the rear or outside of) the rank bar which was now displayed on the collar. Symbols used in these badges included the more obvious types, e.g. crossed cannons = artillery, lorry = motor transport, tank = armour, harp = military band, and balloon = balloon observers. A gold star identified an officer candidate of the regular army, and the same symbol on a gold disc indicated an officer candidate of the non-regular army, i.e. the reserve. Other symbols included a ten-point star indicating a training school, and the *sakura* or cherry blossom which identified units raised in Formosa.

The system was made more complicated by the fact that Independent units substituted Roman numerals for the Arabic ones used by standard units. A few representative examples of the system on the 1938 uniform are:
3rd Tank Regt Left collar, tank; right collar, Arabic '3'
17th Mtn Arty Regt Left, crossed cannons; right – Arabic '17'
1st Independent Garrison Unit Left, crossed rifles over stylised 'I'; right, Roman 'I'.

Specialist & proficiency badges

The Japanese Army wore little in the way of specialist insignia on the 1938 uniform, but some trades were identified by a series of red cloth badges worn on the left upper sleeve. These included: *shoemaker* = pair of shoes; *saddler* = saddle; *bugler* = bugle; *master tailor* = scissors; *master farrier* = horseshoe; *master carpenter* = saw blade; and *pharmacist* = chemical retort.

A small red cloth chevron was awarded for diligence and was worn on the right sleeve of the tunic. Metal pin badges were also worn on the breast of the service uniform as proficiency awards, with various symbols on a cherry blossom background; these included awards for marksmanship, gunnery, riding and observation.

Miscellaneous oval metal badges also existed to mark service in Manchuria, and good conduct for NCOs, both in bronze. Oval metal badges were worn by some officers on service uniform; there does not seem to have been a precise system, but known examples include silver badges for battalion and regimental commanders. The most colourful and rare of this type of badge was worn exclusively by field marshals;

MANCHURIA, 1931–32
1: Private 1st Class, 2nd Inf Div, 1931
2: Private 2nd Class, 1st Cavalry Regt, 1931
3: Corporal, 13th Inf Regt, 6th Inf Div, 1932

CHINA & MANCHUKUO, 1932–35

1: Colonel, field dress, 1935
2: Major-General, 8th Inf Div, Kwangtung Army; Jehol Province, 1933
3: Pte 1st Class, Railway Protection Corps; Manchukuo, 1932

CHINA, 1937–39

1: Captain, 104th Field Artillery Regt; Canton, 1938
2: Lieutenant, 117th Inf Regt, 108th Inf Div, summer 1938
3: Major, 82nd Inf Regt, 21st Inf Div, 1939

CHINA, 1937–39

1: Private 2nd Class, infantry; Peking, July 1937

2: Warrant Officer standard bearer, infantry; Shanghai, August 1937

3: Seaman 1st Class, Naval Landing Division; Shanghai, 1939

NOMONHAN & CHINA, 1939

1: Sergeant, 28th Inf Regt, 7th Inf Div; Nomonhan, June 1939

2: 2nd Lieutenant, tank regiment; China, winter 1938/39

3: Captain, Engineers; China, winter 1938/39

PACIFIC OFFENSIVE, 1942

1: Sergeant-Major, infantry; Borneo, January 1942
2: Superior Private, infantry; Java, DEI, March 1942
3: Seaman 2nd Class paratrooper, 1st (Yokosuka) Special Landing Unit; Celebes, DEI, January 1942

PHILIPPINES & MALAYA, 1942

1: Seaman 1st Class standard bearer, Marine Division; Philippines, 1941–42
2: Superior Private, 47th Inf Regt, 48th Inf Div; Philippines, 1941–42
3: Corporal, 11th Inf Regt, 5th Inf Div; Singapore, Malaya, February 1942

BURMA, 1942
1: Pte 2nd Class, 214th Inf Regt, 33rd Inf Div
2: Corporal, 55th Infantry Division
3: Lieutenant, 18th Infantry Division

A colonel of the Imperial Army poses for a studio portrait somewhere in China, wearing his 1938 uniform with the officer's version of the winter fur hat and holding a *shin-gunto* sword of traditional samurai shape. His rank of *tai-sa* shows particularly clearly on his collar – three silver stars over two gold stripes, with gold edges and the red background showing through as three stripes. (US National Archives)

brightly enamelled in several colours, its design featured two crossed rising sun flags with a *kiri* Imperial symbol superimposed and topped with a yellow *juroku-kiku* chrysanthemum.

Individual regiments were often issued with special badges which were pinned on their uniforms or caps. The best-known example is the 'White Tiger' badge worn by the 214th Inf Regt, 33rd Division, in Burma (see Plate H1). Unfortunately records of most of these designs do not seem to have survived.

Armbands

Armbands were worn on the left sleeve to signify various temporary duties and functions. A white armband with a red central triangle was worn by men attached to the commissariat department. Press corps personnel wore either blue armbands with white characters or white bands with black characters and a gold star. Red armbands with two white stripes around the centre were worn in barracks by the week's duty men.

HEADGEAR & FOOTWEAR

Peaked service cap

The headgear worn most commonly with the Type 90 uniform in the early 1930s was the rather archaic-looking peaked or visored cap which had been in service virtually unchanged since 1905. It had a khaki top, a black leather peak and chinstrap, and a one-and-a-half-inch deep red band. A brass five-point star badge was worn on the front of the band by all ranks; soldiers of the Imperial Guards Division had a different badge with a wreathed star. Some younger officers took to altering the shape of the cap by folding the front upwards in imitation of the 'German' style, but this unofficial restyling was presumably frowned upon by the more traditionalist officers. After the introduction of the field cap the peaked cap was phased out of service, and was seldom worn after the mid-1930s.

Field caps

The headgear most commonly associated with the Japanese Army throughout the period covered is the field cap. This came in a variety of slightly different designs but was basically unchanged until 1945. It is sometimes described as a 'peaked sidecap' which fitted tightly to the head, with a cloth peak and a brown leather chinstrap. First introduced in about 1932, it was in widespread use by the time of the invasion of Jehol Province in 1933. For the first few years of its use the cap was stitched right down the back, but in later years an adjusting lace to tighten the cap was introduced. Winter and summer versions of the cap were made from the same wool and cotton fabrics as the rest of the uniform. On the front of the cap was sewn a stitched yellow cloth five-point star which was usually mounted on a cloth backing. Officers'

These insignia were worn on the shoulders of the Type 90 (1930) service tunic and greatcoat. They were superceded by collar ranking on the Type 98 (1938) uniform under Imperial Ordnance 392 of 31 May 1938. The intermediate rank of *hei-cho*, roughly equivalent to the British and USMC rank of lance-corporal, and identified by a medium-width yellow centre stripe on a red bar, was then inserted in the sequence between 14 and 15 below.

Sho-kan **– general officers (1–4): red bar edged gold, wide gold centre stripe, three to one silver metal stars; (1) coloured enamel right breast badge.**

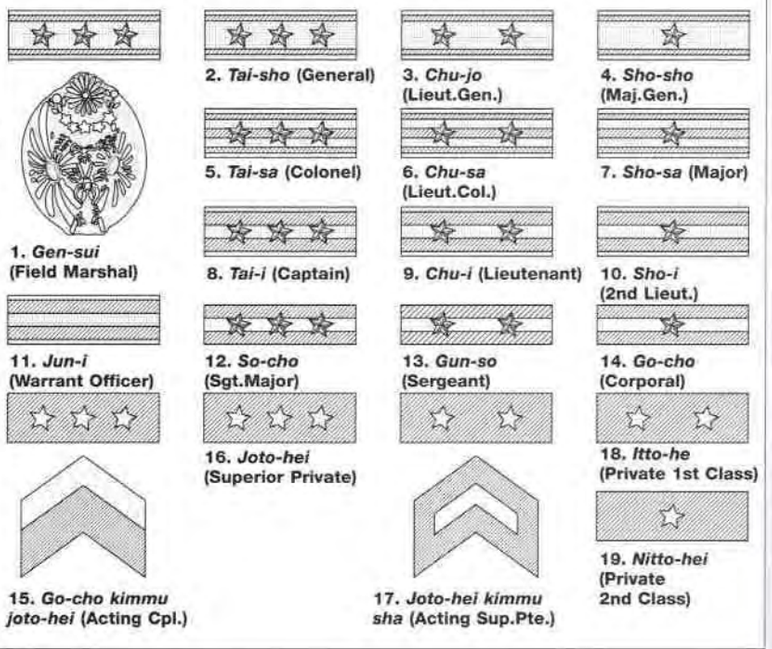
Sa-kan **– field officers (5–7): red bar edged gold, two medium width gold stripes, three to one silver metal stars.**

I-kan **– subaltern officers (8–10), &** ***junshi-kan*** **– warrant officers Class 1 (11): red bar edged gold, one medium width gold stripe; (8–10) three to one silver metal stars.**

Kashi-kan **– non-commissioned officers (12–15): red bar, one medium width yellow stripe, three to one gold metal stars; (15) red & yellow chevron, left upper sleeve.**

Hei **– men (16–19): red bar, three to one yellow cloth stars; (17) white on red chevron, left upper sleeve.**

Imperial Army rank insignia, 1931–38



versions of the cap were usually made from superior cloth and were generally 'stiffer', with a badge made from gold thread.

When worn in the summer or tropics a sun curtain was attached to the back of the cap; made as four separate strips of cloth, this reached to the collar.

Steel helmets

The history of the steel helmets used by the Japanese Army from 1931 to 1945 is somewhat complicated, with several models in service at the same time – indeed, during the 1930s different models were often seen in use in the same unit.

The first model Japanese helmet was introduced in 1920 and was similar in shape to a British World War I type, but with the front slightly lower than the rear. Although this helmet had officially been superseded by 1930 it was still seen in limited use during the early fighting in Manchuria.

Three new pattern helmets were introduced in 1930 on a trial basis, varying greatly in design. The first 1930 pattern was inspired by the French Adrian of 1915, but had a cherry blossom-shaped external plate at the apex; and, like the 1920 pattern, it was slightly lower than its foreign model and had a more protruding front brim (see Plate A1). A second 1930 pattern was only issued in limited numbers, but was seen in service in Manchuria. This type (see Plate A3) was like a wider and flatter version of the German 1935 model, protruding quite markedly away from the side of the head. The shape allowed the fur hat to be worn under it easily, and this may indeed have been the reason for the testing

of this design. The third 1930 pattern was the pot-shaped helmet which was eventually adopted, though slightly altered to produce the 1932 model which became the standard issue until 1945.

The 1932 steel helmet fastened by means of a series of tapes which passed under the chin and around the ears before being tied in a bow at the back of the head. These tapes were generally arranged in a set way, and in fact the Army and Navy had their own distinct systems for fastening them. Later in the war a simplified system of tapes was introduced. Inside the helmet were a number of small pads which could be adjusted to fit snugly to the head. The 1932 helmet had a rather bad reputation because of its reported low standard of protection; it was made of a poor grade of chrome molybdenum steel and was easily pierced or shattered by bullets. Helmets were often fitted with quilted linen covers stitched together from four segments. These covers were held in place by tapes and had a yellow star badge sewn on the front.

Another early model helmet was based closely on the British World War I type but with a more flared rim. This was worn only by Naval Landing Forces, and had that branch's badge embossed on the front. Soon replaced by the standard 1932 model, it saw its main service during the fighting in Shanghai in 1932, which mostly involved naval ground units.

Sun helmets

The Japanese Imperial Army, like all other colonial powers in the 1930s, issued their men with cork sun helmets. There were two main patterns: the first was basically the classic 'solar topi' shape as worn by the British, French and other colonial forces. It had a metal ventilator at the apex, a couple of ventilation eyelets on either side, and a brown leather chinstrap. This model appears to have been worn mainly by officers, although photographs show that some enlisted ranks did receive it.

The second pattern was of a rounder, bowl-like shape similar to the steel helmet but made of cork. Six segments of khaki cotton cloth were fastened over the top of the cork and a strip of cloth fastened around the base of the helmet. This model was much more widely issued to the rank and file as well as officers, although the latter would commonly have bought better quality versions privately. A white cotton covered version of this helmet, with a khaki cloth strip around the base, also existed for officers. All these types of sun helmet had a yellow star badge on the front mounted on a pentagonal piece of khaki cloth.

China, 1940: an interesting group photograph of officers and men in relaxed mood outside their billets. All wear versions of the standard field cap. The soldier at far left wears the single-breasted 1938 pattern greatcoat; the rest wear 1938 (left & right) and modified 1930 (centre) tunics of various types – note the different shades of khaki. Footwear is a mixture of brown leather ankle boots, *tabi* and sandals, and the sergeant (fourth from left) has leather leggings. Visible insignia include a weekly duty armband in red and white (fourth from left), and the acting corporal's yellow and red chevron (far right). The officer (centre) has the red and white sash which indicated the duty officer of the week. (Philip Pangborn Collection)

Footwear

The most commonly worn footwear during the 1930–45 period was the brown pigskin hobnailed ankle boot. Although these came in various slightly

Manchuria, early 1930s: a unit of Japanese infantry stage a mock advance for the propaganda cameras. Nearly all are wearing the first or 'cherry blossom' model steel helmet tested from 1930, loosely based on the French Adrian type. At far right, however, one of the crew of the Type 3 medium machine gun appears to have the 1920 model, vaguely based on the British design. Note that some of the men in the trench behind the machine gun are wearing goggles, so may be from a motorised unit. (Gerard Gorokhoff Collection)

differing designs they were all basically the same item. Officers also wore this type of boot at times, though normally of superior quality.

A form of shoe peculiar to the Japanese soldier was called the *tabi*. This was a rubber-soled, ankle-high, black canvas shoe of 'camel-toed' design, i.e. with a separated big toe section. Other lightweight canvas and rubber shoes had a more conventional design, although the divided-toe type seems to have been the most widely worn. One form of improvised footwear was the *waraji* sandal, home-made by the soldiers from straw. These were traditional peasants' and soldiers' wear in Japan, and were ideal for walking through mud. Mounted soldiers of the cavalry, horse artillery and transport corps wore high brown leather boots with spurs attached.

Officers' footwear usually came in black leather. The two most common types were the marching boot, which was basically an ankle boot, and a high riding boot. Mounted officers wore either black leather riding boots or ankle boots with leather leggings.

PROTECTIVE & SPECIALIST CLOTHING

Type 90 & Type 98 greatcoats

The Type 90 (1930) greatcoat for enlisted ranks and officers was of heavy mustard-khaki wool, double-breasted with two rows of brass buttons. A large removable hood was fastened to the collar by a two-button strap on either side. Rank was displayed on the shoulders of the greatcoat, with the rank bars attached just above the seam. The Type 98 (1938) greatcoat was single-breasted, in a more olive khaki shade, with five metal front buttons, and the rank bars attached to the turn-down collar. A simple system of rank indicators was also worn on the cuffs: a red patch with three yellow stripes for officers, two yellow stripes for warrant officers, and a single yellow stripe for NCOs.

Type 98 officer's raincoat

The 1938 pattern double-breasted hooded raincoat was worn mainly by officers; this had two rows of metal front buttons. The top of the coat was usually folded back to form a large lapel which fastened to the second button from the top. Rank bars were displayed on the collar when worn open, but a different system was used when it was worn closed. A cloth tab was worn across the throat bearing one, two or three green stripes for company officers, field officers and general officers respectively.

Type 90 & Type 98 capes

Officers could wear a knee-length cape or 'mantle' over the uniform. These fastened with one button at the neck. Both the pre- and post-1938 model capes had turn-down collars, the later displaying the rank bars. The earlier type had a system of one, two and three rank stars for company, field and general officers respectively.

A short waist-length cape was worn by mounted officers and NCOs and by Kempei-tei personnel; this came in Types 90 and 98 models. Both were fastened by buttons down the chest, with the later model displaying the rank bars on the turn-down collar.

August 1940: a superior private (left) and a sergeant, in summer shirtsleeve order with collar ranking, and high brown leather boots; both hold the 1935 pattern NCOs' *shin-gunto* sword with plain leather fist strap. Some other members of this group are still wearing the M1930 tunic with ranking moved to the collar. (Richard Fuller Collection)

Cold weather clothing, 1931–42

Given that the Japanese Army was to spend a great deal of time fighting in the extremely severe conditions of the Manchurian and Chinese winters, a great variety of winter garments were issued during this period. Underneath the winter version of the 1930 and 1938 uniforms the Japanese soldier would wear extra layers, including green woollen winter shirts and a woollen toque or balaclava. Over the uniform trousers he might wear special padded overtrousers which fastened with a cloth belt, and fur-lined anklets tied with cloth tapes. Over the wool tunic he could wear any of the following:

Winter surcoat The most common cold weather garment in service in Manchuria and China was the sheepskin-lined, sleeveless surcoat or jerkin. This fastened at the front by laces or buttons, and reached down to just above the knee; it normally had one breast and one waist pocket. Locally manufactured, it probably varied in details.

Winter coat A special winter coat, issued to both enlisted men and officers, was made of a heavy, light khaki-coloured sailcloth material. Double-breasted with two rows of brown plastic front buttons, it was lined with fleece or pile. It had a fur-faced collar and cuffs, with removable sleeves which buttoned on just above the elbow. The officers' version would have been of superior manufacture if not of superior material.

Fur hats A vital item of winter clothing was the fur-lined hat, a round cap with fur inside and fur-lined flaps which could be worn either down to cover the ears or fastened over the crown by buttons or a press stud. Earlier types worn in Manchuria in 1931 had thicker, shaggier-looking linings; later models had a more uniform lining and a much neater appearance.

Snow camouflage To a small extent items made from white cloth for snow camouflage were issued for wear over the uniform: a snow cape with attached hood, and white over-mittens. Fur-lined covers were also issued for pieces of equipment made of metal such as the mess tin and waterbottle.

Winter footwear This included overshoes and special winter half-boots. Special fur-lined winter gaiters or anklets fastened under the instep with a leather strap and had four buckles up the outside of the leg.

Specialist uniforms

Tank crew uniforms Armoured crewmen wore special overalls in both winter and summer versions. The warm weather version was made from the same cotton as the 1938 summer uniform; a one-piece design, it had a single pocket on the left breast, and rank was worn on the turn-down collar. The winter version was a two-piece suit; the fur-collared jacket had a single left breast pocket, and the rank bar was attached to the chest. Under this winter jacket the tankers wore high, bib-fronted trousers made of heavy duty cotton material, fastened up each side by five buttons. The trousers had two thigh pockets and another on the right chest under the jacket.

Crash helmets also came in seasonal versions: cotton-covered cork for summer and a fur-lined version for winter. The summer type had a leather chin strap which fitted around the ears; on the winter version this was replaced by fur-lined ear flaps. A second winter pattern for wear in 'extreme' climate had a thicker fur lining to the chin straps.

Anti-chemical protective clothing The Japanese Army used poison gas in China, and three types of chemical warfare protective clothing were available. The first two were both lightweight rubberised silk suits; the first is described as a 'cellophane' type, made up of a hooded jacket, trousers, boot covers and gloves with a cellophane lining. A second pattern, described as a 'casein' type, had jacket, trousers, overboots and gloves all coated with that substance. The heavyweight version was made of a reddish-brown rubberised fabric and consisted of an overall suit with attached boots and hood.

All types of protective suit were worn with standard Type 95 or 99 gas masks.

Working dress A wide variety of 'fatigues' or working dress were used by the Imperial Japanese Army. The first type summer fatigues were a white cotton jacket and trousers worn over the uniform shirt; the rank bar was displayed above the left of a pair of breast pockets. The second type, a one-piece overall with a single left breast pocket, was light khaki in colour; again, rank was displayed on the left breast. These second type fatigues were worn with a special light khaki cotton cap, with ear flaps which were normally tied on top.

Special fatigues for winter wear included a pair of khaki heavy cotton bib-fronted trousers with a right breast pocket, two leg pockets and a right rear pocket. Over the bib-and-brace trousers was worn a fur-collared working jacket with buttoned cuffs.

Manchuria, winter 1932: a party of soldiers each carrying two artillery rounds, probably for 70mm battalion guns, up to a hillside position. All four have the new 1930/32 pot-shaped steel helmet, and wear the sheepskin surcoat over the top of their 1930 wool uniforms. Under their helmets they are wearing fur-lined caps; they also have woollen gloves and thick woollen puttees. (Peter Newark's Military Pictures)

OPPOSITE **China, 1930s: a young sergeant poses for a snapshot to send home to his family. He is wearing the winter hat with fur lining and ear flaps, and the double-breasted winter coat with fur collar and cuffs and detachable lower sleeves – cf Plate B2. The long 1930 pattern rank bars show clearly on the shoulders. (Author's Collection)**

Crewmen of a Type 89B medium tank of the 13th Tank Regiment in China pass ammunition for the 57mm main gun up to the turret hatch. Three of them wear the light summer version of the crash helmet, and the men on the turret have goggles. The man at right foreground appears to have a bandaged face wound. (US National Archives)

INFANTRY EQUIPMENT

The field equipment used in 1931 was rather old-fashioned in design. The basis of the infantryman's field gear was the brown leather belt with a single-prong frame buckle, with two heavy, box-like ammunition pouches at the front and one larger pouch at the back; the bayonet scabbard was frogged on the left hip, where the belt was supported by a buttoning tab on the tunic. The two front pouches each held six five-round clips of rifle ammunition while the rear pouch held 12 clips and the rifle cleaning kit, giving a total load of 120 rounds. Although the material of the belt was changed to a rubberised fabric and the pouches to vulcanised fibre in the later war years, the basic design remained the same.

The spare clothing and other necessary items were carried in a stiff cowhide knapsack with the hair left on. Attached to the back of the knapsack by leather straps were a metal mess tin and, more often than not, an entrenching tool. Entrenching tools were carried in a ratio of two shovels to one pick, and these were easily disassembled for ease of carrying. Overcoats, when not worn, were rolled up and worn strapped around the upper half of the knapsack, with a waterproof tent half/poncho fastened over the top. The rest of the equipment, slung separately, included a canvas haversack or 'bread bag', a metal waterbottle (which came in several models), and a gas mask bag.

A lighter and cheaper canvas knapsack was introduced during the 1930s, with canvas ties replacing the leather straps. Personal items were usually carried in the haversack, but the soldier's most prized possessions were carried in a small canvas drawstring bag.

Officers' field equipment usually consisted of a sword belt, despatch (map) case, field glasses in a brown leather case, and a waterbottle. Sword belts to carry the various types of military sword in use were made either of brown leather or green canvas fabric. The sword was usually attached by means of a single leather hanger, to both the leather and fabric types. An alternative type of sword belt was worn under the tunic with the hanger passing through slots in both the jacket and overcoat.

WEAPONS

The relatively easy victories achieved during the fighting in China and the first Pacific offensive masked a number of weaknesses in weaponry. The armaments employed from 1931 to 1941 were generally serviceable, but many were of elderly design. They were adequate at the start of the Pacific War, but there was little development of new designs from 1941 onwards; the Japanese had to make do with what they had, while the Allies were constantly introducing new and better weaponry.

Small arms

The standard Japanese rifle was the five-shot, bolt-action 6.5mm Arisaka Type 38 (known to soldiers as the *sanpachiju*), a copy of the classic German Mauser system which dated from the Russo-Japanese War. It was sturdy and simple, but at 50.2ins. (1.275m) too long for the short stature of the average Japanese soldier – many had difficulty in reaching the bolt when the butt was in the shoulder in firing position. For sniping a telescopic sight was mounted well back for this reason; this was of surprisingly mediocre performance, and sniper training concentrated on concealment for medium range action rather than long range marksmanship. A decision to change the standard round from the 6.5mm semi-rimmed to a more powerful 7.7mm rimless cartridge complicated life for the quartermaster branch; both long (50in.) and short (43.9in.) versions of the 7.7mm Type 99 (1939) rifle were introduced.

Two special 'break-down' paratrooper's rifles were produced, and paratroopers were also issued with the only sub-machine gun in the Japanese inventory, the 8mm Type 100 (1940), based on the German MP28; but only some 27,000 were made in two versions, and few were issued. Neither paratroopers, nor SMGs, figured in the usual orders of battle. Handguns were of three basic types: the Type 26 (1893) 9mm revolver, and two semi-automatic pistols, the Type 14 (1925) and Type 94 (1934) both in 8mm. The Type 14, called by the Allies simply the 'Nambu' after the major Japanese arms manufacturer, was the favourite of Japanese officers; the squat, ugly Type 94 had a tendency to jam.

The Japanese had a variety of hand grenades including three 'pineapple' types, the Types 91 (1931), 97 (1937) and 99 (1939); two different stick grenades were also used. Four different types of rifle grenade launcher – Types 91, 2, 3 and 100 – could be fitted to the Arisaka to project either fragmentation, smoke or AT grenades.

Crewmen of a column of Type 94 tankettes take a break during an advance and pose for the camera eating sugar cane. All wear the summer version of tank overalls with field caps. Rank bars were usually displayed above the single left breast pocket, but none are visible here. Most of these men wear the teardrop-shaped tankers' goggles; two (left foreground, and standing, centre background) seem to have the angled-lens type usually issued to motorcyclists. (Gerard Gorokhoff Collection)

Swords

Until the mid-1930s the standard Imperial Japanese officer's sword was either the 1875 or 1886 *kyu-gunto* – 'first military sword'. This was of conventional Western appearance, a slightly curved sabre with a metal hand guard. The 1875 model was regulated for commissioned officers and the 1886 for warrant officers.

The traditional 'samurai' blades as used in feudal Japan, though rarely dating from earlier than the Edo Period, were sometimes carried into battle by modern Japanese officers. There were two types: the longer *katana* or *tachi* of 24–36ins. (the different names indicating whether it was slung edge-up or edge-down respectively), and the *wakizashi* of 12–24ins., both of which might historically be carried together at the hip by the samurai warrior. Ancient examples of such blades were revered not simply as family heirlooms; many Japanese believed that such objects embodied a spirit and had mystic significance. The rise amongst the Army's younger officers of nationalistic fervour based upon traditional values led to calls for a 'traditional' sword to replace the European pattern. These demands were answered by the introduction in 1934 of the Type 94 *shin-gunto* or 'new military sword' – a modern manufactured version of the *tachi*. It was carried in either a painted metal or a wooden scabbard covered with leather, sometimes in a looser fabric cover. Scabbards hung from belts by straps which fastened to either one or two suspension mounts, the bottom one being removable.

Swords were also carried by NCOs, the first pattern *shin-gunto* introduced for this rank being the 'Type 95 pattern Army NCO's sword'. The status of the wearer was indicated by the colour of the sword strap and tassel (while the tassel was purely decorative, the strap was worn around the wrist to secure the weapon in combat):

General officers – brown and red strap with gold wire, zig-zag stitching and yellow tassel.

Field officers – brown and red strap and tassel.

Company & warrant officers – brown and blue strap and tassel.

Sergeant-major, sergeant & corporal – brown strap and tassel.

Support weapons

The useful 50mm Type 89 (1929) grenade launcher/light mortar – quite erroneously called the 'knee mortar' by some commentators who clearly lack first hand experience – was produced in large numbers and was standard issue down to section level. It had a rifled barrel, an adjustable firing pin giving good range control out to 700 yards (650m), and it took a number of HE, fragmentation, incendiary, illumination and smoke projectiles.

Other mortars included the 50mm Type 98 (1938) smooth-bore demolition type firing a square-headed 7lb stick projectile; the 70mm Type 11 (1922) rifled type; the 81mm Types 3 (1928), 97 (1937) and 99 (1939) – the first a conventional copy of the classic French Brandt model, the second and third, lightened and shortened versions; and heavy 90mm Types 94 (1934) and 97 (1937), and 150mm Type 97 models, which were generally emplaced in fixed defensive positions. (Allied reports speak of Japanese skill with mortars, and they were certainly widely encountered; it is therefore surprising that the major US Army intelligence appreciation does not include dedicated mortar companies/platoons within the Japanese infantry unit organisation plan.)

The standard wool winter weight Type 98 (1938) uniform, worn without distinguishing insignia. Note the variation in colour between the different parts of the uniform, with the field cap and tunic of a lighter khaki shade than the trousers; and the typical X-shape made by the canvas securing straps tied over his puttees. He is wearing full marching kit with leather knapsack; canvas haversack and leather-strapped water bottle hidden behind his right hip; gas mask bag under his left arm; and standard leather belt with two of the three cartridge pouches visible at the front. His rifle is a 7.7mm Arisaka Type 99, with a wire monopod folded under the forestock. (US National Archives)

A machine gunner in China wears his 1930 summer tunic with rank bars removed from the two shoulder loops which normally held them in place. He is firing a 6.5mm Type 3 medium machine gun; introduced into service in 1914, this was based on the French Hotchkiss design. (Robert Hunt Library)

The Japanese infantry were aggressive and enthusiastic users of machine guns, but once again their logistics suffered from a lack of standardisation. Light machine guns included the 6.5mm Type 11 (1922), which took the same round as the Arisaka rifle and had a hopper feed system – in theory the section's riflemen could 'top it up' with five-round clips. Since the extractor required oil lubrication of the cartridges, this open feed system was an invitation to dirt and stoppages. The much superior 6.5mm Type 96 (1936) was based on the highly successful Czech ZB26, had a quick-change barrel and was fed from a 30-round box magazine; this too required oiled cartridges, but the system was improved. With the change to a 7.7mm round there appeared a development of the Type 96 LMG termed the Type 99 (1939); this is most easily identifiable in photos by its conical flash-hider at the muzzle.

Both the standard medium machine guns were based on the air-cooled French Hotchkiss system, fed from the left side by 30-round metal strips: the 6.5mm Type 3 (1914) and the heavier 7.7mm Type 92 (1932). Another model, in use mainly with the Navy but later also by the Army, took a different, rimmed 7.7mm round but was also confusingly known as the Type 92; this was a copy of the Lewis gun. The heavy machine gun was the 13.2mm Type 93 (1933), basically a copy of the Hotchkiss M1932 in that calibre.

Japanese artillery equipment was of a general quality comparable to early Allied counterparts, with 70mm infantry, 75mm field and mountain guns based on elderly German and French patterns; the mountain type broke down into six packhorse loads. The 47mm AT gun which replaced the 37mm in the mid-war years was particularly effective. The medium regiments commonly had 105mm Type 99 (1939) and 150mm Type 4 (1915) howitzers, and the major weakness of the artillery arm lay in these heavier guns – they were too few to be effective against the massed US and British artillery which they increasingly faced as the war progressed.

Manchuria: an artillery crew manhandle a 150mm Type 4 (1915) heavy howitzer into position on *tatami* mats to prevent it sinking into the soft ground. The gunners are wearing camouflage netting capes over their shoulders; their field caps appear to be of the early pattern without adjusting laces at the back. Officers observing the crew are wearing a mixture of service and field caps. (Philip Pangborn Collection)

THE PLATES

A: MANCHURIA, 1931–32

A1: Private 1st Class, 2nd Infantry Division, 1931

This *itto-hei* wears the most common of the early types of steel helmet used in the mainland campaigns, known as the 'cherry blossom' model from the shape of the plate riveted at the apex. Japanese troops had seen service in certain areas of Manchuria throughout the 1920s and were prepared for the harsh conditions they met in 1931; this soldier wears the fur-lined winter surcoat or jerkin over his Type 90 (1930) woollen uniform. His marching equipment includes the early pattern leather knapsack and early model water bottle. His rifle is the 6.5mm Arisaka Type 38 of 1905, which remained the standard Japanese rifle until 1945 despite the introduction of the new 7.7mm cartridge and Type 99 rifle.

A2: Private 2nd Class, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1931

The Japanese made widespread use of cavalry during the fighting in Manchuria and China from 1931. This trooper's lowly rank of *nitohei* is indicated on the shoulder bars of his Type 90 woollen winter tunic. The brass Arabic number pinned to the 'swallowtail' collar patch in cavalry green identifies his regiment. The peaked service cap was still widely worn at this time but would soon be replaced with the field cap; note that all arms of service wore it with a red band and crown piping. His winter model woollen cavalry breeches are tucked into brown leather boots with spurs. His light equipment includes a single cavalry ammunition pouch for his elderly Type 30 6.5mm carbine; his Type 32 cavalry sabre is longer than the standard model, giving him a better reach when using it from the saddle.

A3: Corporal, 13th Infantry Regiment, 6th Infantry Division, 1932

This *go-cho* wears the second main type of steel helmet tested in limited issue by the Japanese from 1930. The shape, somewhat resembling a widened, flattened German M1935, allows him to wear a fur-lined cap beneath it in winter. These two different models of helmet were worn concurrently, and indeed were sometimes seen within the same platoon. His uniform is the basic 1930 wool winter pattern; though obscured here by his cap flaps, the brass Arabic '13' of his regiment is pinned to both collar patches. His light field equipment includes a canvas haversack, an early pattern gask mask in its canvas bag, and his water bottle, all slung diagonally. Note that with the knapsack removed there were no support braces for the belt and ammunition pouches – these would drag considerably if fully loaded with 120 rounds for his Type 38 Arisaka.

A *joto-hei* poses in a studio in Manchuria in the early 1930s, wearing his Type 90 double-breasted greatcoat with an impressive added fur collar; cf Plate B. On the left sleeve he wears the red and yellow chevron indicating the temporary rank of *go-cho kimmu* or acting corporal; and below it the red and white striped armband which shows that he is one of that week's duty men. (Philip Pangborn Collection)

B: CHINA & MANCHUKUO, 1932–35

B1: Colonel, field dress, 1935

This *tai-sa* serving in the demilitarised zone of northern China wears the officer's version of the 1930 pattern double-breasted greatcoat, with his rank indicated by transverse shoulder bars. The officer's field cap was in widespread use by 1935 although the peaked cap was also still seen. His 1930 pattern officer's winter uniform is hidden here apart from his black leather officer's riding boots with spurs. He is armed with a *kyu-gunto* officer's sabre, though this was often replaced with the *shin-gunto* of traditional Japanese shape. On his belt he has the holstered Nambu Type 14 semi-automatic pistol introduced in 1925, by far the most common sidearm for Japanese officers.

B2: Major-General, 8th Infantry Division, Kwangtung Army; Jehol Province, 1933

Commanding his division's infantry group during the invasion of the Chinese province of Jehol in 1933, this *sho-sho* wears an officer's fur-lined winter coat with fur collar and cuffs and detachable lower sleeves. Rank, as always, is displayed on the transverse shoulder bars. The officer's peaked service cap was being phased out of first line service but was probably retained for longer by the older, more traditional officers. The only equipment the general carries is a pair of officer's binoculars.

B3: Private 1st Class, Railway Protection Corps; Manchukuo, 1932

This soldier serves with a unit responsible for the protection of the vulnerable railway lines, which came under constant attack by anti-Japanese Manchurian guerrillas. He is dressed for guard duty in the harsh northern winter in the double-breasted Type 90 greatcoat with hood. The fur caps worn by the Japanese Army came in various styles while conforming to the same basic design; the separate fur-lined ear flaps could be worn down, as here, or laced up on top of the cap to allow better hearing while the face was still protected by the main cheek pieces. While on guard duty he has left most of his equipment on the train; note the special pouches for the Type 11 (1922) light machine gun clips. His personal weapon is a 'Meiji 26' (1893) 9mm revolver holstered on his right hip.

ABOVE **China, 1938: a second lieutenant on observation duties, still wearing shoulder rank bars on his summer weight 1930 pattern tunic. As was common practice, he wears his field cap underneath his steel helmet. Clutched in his left hand is his *kyu-gunto* European-style officer's sabre with the sword knot from a *shin-gunto* sword wrapped around the knucklebow. (J.Smith Collection)**

ABOVE RIGHT **China, mid-1930s: cf Plate C1. This bearded captain looking through a battery commander's binocular telescope is presumably an artilleryman, so the 'swallowtail' collar patches on his 1930 pattern tunic would be in the yellow of that arm of service. Note the long transverse rank bar on his shoulder; and the complicated arrangement of tapes which hold the 1930/32 helmet in place. Just as in the days of the samurai, there was a correct way to tie these. (Robert Hunt Library)**

C: CHINA, 1937–39

C1: Captain, 104th Field Artillery Regiment; Canton, 1938

This *tai-i* of artillery, serving with the infantry division of the same number, illustrates what the average officer would have worn at the front during the China campaign. His 1930 pattern winter tunic displays his rank on the shoulder bars and his arm of service by the yellow colour of his collar patches. The 1932 steel helmet – exactly the same model as worn by the enlisted ranks – is tied on with tapes arranged in the prescribed Imperial Army way. Note the four leather straps across his chest; three of these are the slings for his binoculars, despatch case and water bottle, while the fourth supports his enlisted man's pattern belt and his holstered Type 14 pistol. His Type 94 *shin-gunto* sword is carried in the wood and leather scabbard which was often used for front line service.

C2: Lieutenant, 117th Infantry Regiment, 108th Infantry Division, summer 1938

A *chu-i* wearing the 1930 pattern summer tunic in its transitional form, with the rank bars moved from the shoulders to the collar according to the new 1938 dress regulations. The Type 90 uniform, in both its original and modified forms, continued to be worn for a number of years after the introduction of the Type 98. This officer wears the first type of cork sun helmet, sometimes seen in use by all ranks during the fighting in China; presumably, as with all other items of uniform, the officer's private purchase version would have been of superior make. His sword is the Type 94 *shin-gunto* in a painted metal scabbard, with the brown and blue fist strap and tassel of a company officer. Note the double belt arrangement supporting his pistol, ammunition pouch and sword.

C3: Major, 82nd Infantry Regiment, 21st Infantry Division, 1939

This battalion commander is wearing the 1938 pattern Type 98 officer's field uniform. Rank is worn on the stand-and-fall collar, and his branch is shown by the red W-shaped 'chevron' above the right breast pocket. The field cap had now replaced the visored service cap as standard headgear for both officers and enlisted ranks, though this officer's private purchase cap would be of superior quality to his men's. Although the 1934 *shin-gunto* sword was of the same design as the medieval samurai sword, this is a modern manufactured example. Some officers of ancient *daimyo* families had treasured family heirloom blades remounted in modern furniture for service in World War II (though genuine examples of such ancient, signed blades are far rarer than post-war dealers would have the collector believe). Note the stitched fabric field belt; and the brown and red field officer's strap and tassel on the sword carried by this *sho-sa*.

D: CHINA, 1937–39

D1: Private 2nd Class, infantry; Peking, July 1937

This soldier performs a *'Banzai!'* to celebrate the fall of Peking during the first summer campaign following the 'Marco Polo Bridge incident' which sparked off the full scale invasion of China. He still wears the 1930 pattern summer uniform with shoulder rank bars, but has the 1932 pot-shaped helmet with embossed frontal star badge. His woollen puttees are secured by ties at the top, and also have fabric cross straps tied diagonally over them. His light field equipment comprises belt with pouches and bayonet scabbard, 1935 pattern gas mask bag, canvas haversack and old pattern water bottle. The bayonet is carried fixed, which was standard practice; infantry training emphasised the use of cold steel in the assault.

D2: Warrant Officer standard bearer, infantry; Shanghai, August 1937

This *jun-i* is an infantry battalion standard bearer and carries the smaller type of flag which signified that size of unit. Flags featured prominently in Japanese units and had a great significance to the soldiers who followed them into battle. His uniform is the basic 1930 summer model. The cloth tied around his cap was worn as a field sign during night fighting. Because this soldier is carrying the flag he is armed with his NCO's 1935 model *shin-gunto* sword as well as a pistol.

D3: Seaman 1st Class, Naval Landing Division; Shanghai, 1939

This marine of the Naval Landing Forces at Shanghai is wearing the 1937 pattern 'sea green'-coloured cotton uniform of the NLF – a rather more modern looking uniform than the archaic 1930 pattern still worn by the Imperial Army. The open-collar tunic is worn over a sailor's vest, with the usual type of trousers, puttees and brown leather landing shoes. His rank, on the right sleeve, is the only insignia worn on the tunic, although petty officers wore yellow metal anchors on the lapel. The 1932 pattern steel helmet is held in place by the usual tapes, but these are fixed in the naval fashion with the knot at the back of his head. On the front of the helmet is embossed the early pattern of the NLF's anchor badge. His full set of equipment includes the naval version of the bread bag and water bottle. On his back he has the early pattern gas respirator, which was in common use by this type of troops in Shanghai. The Type 38 rifle was the standard pattern for all branches of the Japanese Imperial forces. *(Note: the Naval Landing Forces will be covered in more detail in the forthcoming second book in this sequence.)*

E: NOMONHAN & CHINA, 1939

E1: Sergeant, 28th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division; Nomonhan, June 1939

During the fighting in the wastelands on the Mongolian border in the summers of 1938 and 1939 Japanese soldiers suffered terribly from the plague of mosquitoes. This *gun-so* is about to put on the bucket-shaped anti-mosquito netting head screen, and wears the special mittens issued for the same reason. The rest of his uniform is the standard 1930 summer pattern of light khaki cotton, with the collar ranking of the 1938 regulations.

E2: 2nd Lieutenant of a tank regiment; China, winter 1938/39

This *sho-i* commanding a tank platoon wears the two-piece winter version of the tank suit – a fur-collared jacket over bib-and-brace overtrousers, and fur-lined weather boots. His rank bar is worn on the right breast. His crash helmet is of the leather-covered, fur-lined winter type with ear flaps over cut-outs in the cheek pieces, and he is wearing a pair of goggles. The holster identifies his sidearm as the unattractive and inefficient 8mm Type 94 semi-automatic pistol.

E3: Captain, Engineers; China, winter 1938/39

This company commander wears the standard officer's 1930 pattern winter uniform, still with the old 'swallowtail' collar patches – here in the burgundy branch colour of the engineers. Over this is slung the later, 1938 model of the officer's cape or mantle. His sword is carried on a stitched canvas belt in place of the leather type, and he has a cloth cover tied over the hilt to protect it.

A colonel poses for a studio portrait wearing the 1938 service dress with white dress gloves; note the rank insignia on his collar and the row of awards on his chest. The latter include the Order of the Rising Sun and the Order of the Sacred Treasure, as well as the Border Incident Medal for service in the fighting against the Red Army on the Mongolia-Manchukuo border. The aiguillettes identified an ADC or attaché. (Gerard Gorokhoff Collection)

F: PACIFIC OFFENSIVE, 1942

F1: Sergeant-Major, infantry; Borneo, January 1942

This *so-cho*, pictured during the Japanese take-over of the British and Dutch territories on the oil-rich island of Borneo, is dressed in typical tropical uniform. Attached to his field cap is the four-strip sun curtain. His rank is worn in this case on the collar of his shirt, but a single bar could also be worn above the left breast pocket. Although he is armed with a Type 14 pistol he is holding his 1935 pattern NCO's sword, which has a plain brown strap and tassel.

F2: Superior Private, infantry; Batavia, Java, Dutch East Indies, March 1942

This *joto-hei* is a rifle section mortar man, and carries the so-called 'knee mortar' – the 50mm Type 89 rifled grenade discharger. (Among Allied troops it was popularly rumoured that the mortar could be fired while resting the base on the firer's thigh; anyone foolish enough to try this risked a shattered femur from the force of the recoil.) He wears a tropical uniform of tunic, trousers and woollen puttees and has a canvas cover on his Type 92 steel helmet. His belt and a neck strap support the special ammunition pouches which each contained four 50mm rounds; the range of ammunition included the Type 89 HE shell, Type 91 fragmentation grenade, smoke and incendiary shells and various pyrotechnic signal rounds. The rest of his equipment is made up of an early model water bottle and a canvas haversack.

F3: Seaman 2nd Class paratrooper, 1st (Yokosuka) Special Landing Unit; Menado, Celebes, Dutch East Indies, January 1942

One of the few airborne attacks launched by the Japanese in the Pacific War was undertaken by a naval paratroop unit on the Dutch-held airfield of Menado, Celebes, on 11 January 1942 – the day that Japan declared war on the Netherlands. The 324-strong unit successfully seized control of the airfield from a Dutch garrison of 1,500 men. This paratrooper wears the standard, multi-pocket, two-piece jump-suit made of 'sea green' cotton, with his rank marked by the red crossed anchors patch on his right sleeve. The naval version of the paratrooper's steel helmet is basically the 1932 'pot' with improved internal fittings, and the Navy's anchor badge embossed on the front. His equipment features belt kit and two canvas bandoliers; he is armed with a Type 14 semi-automatic pistol and a Type 97 fragmentation grenade for the initial landing phase, as he makes his way to the parachuted containers of rifles and sub-machine guns.

A cavalry private second class wearing a rather unkempt Type 98 uniform with the outdated service cap. Above his right breast pocket is the green inverted-W 'chevron' identifying his arm of service; these insignia were not always worn. His only equipment is his brown leather belt with the single cavalry pouch holding ammunition for his Type 98 carbine. (Philip Pangborn Collection)

G: PHILIPPINES & MALAYA, 1942

G1: Seaman 1st Class standard bearer, Marine Division; Philippines, 1941–42

Naval Landing Forces were heavily involved in the Japanese conquest of the Philippines; the flag carried here is that of the Imperial Navy, which differed from that of the Imperial Army in that the sun disc was off-set towards the hoist side. The olive green cotton uniform was special to the Naval Landing Forces, and in this case is of the 1940 pattern. The Navy's anchor badge in yellow is stitched to the khaki helmet cover. Ranks were indicated on this uniform by red badges on navy blue cloth discs on the right sleeve; the grades of seaman were identified by an anchor, crossed anchors, and – as here – crossed anchors below a plum blossom. Both the haversack and water bottle cover were made from a blueish-khaki canvas peculiar to the Navy. His weapon is the standard Arisaka Type 38 rifle.

G2: Superior Private, 47th Infantry Regiment, 48th Infantry Division; Philippines, 1941–42

This is a rifle section light machine gunner from one of the units which fought during the conquest of the Philippines. He wears tropical uniform – note the rank bars on the turned-over shirt collar – and his helmet, camouflaged with a net and foliage, is carried slung. His weapon is the Type 96 light machine gun based (like the British Bren) on the Czech ZB26; this was a great improvement over the old Type 11, though that was still in widespread service. A special belt and pouches for LMG magazines were manufactured, but he has not received it; 150 rounds of ammunition are carried in a large canvas bag slung behind him here. For personal defence he is issued with a holstered pistol. Characteristically, the LMG has a fitting to take the Arisaka bayonet, although it must have taken a very strong man to wield the heavy LMG in hand-to-hand combat.

G3: Corporal, 11th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division; Singapore, Malaya, February 1942

Bicycles were extensively used by the Japanese during their campaigns of conquest in the Pacific, and particularly during the invasion of Malaya. As the Japanese advanced in the heat of SE Asia the dress code went out the window, and many soldiers could be seen wearing whatever was most comfortable. This *go-cho* has stripped off his tropical tunic and wears only his work shirt, with his rank bar attached to the pocket. The rest of his uniform is standard tropical gear, and includes the second type of cork sun helmet worn by officers and enlisted ranks alike. His shoes are the unique *tabi* type, of black canvas and rubber with a separate big toe. His rifle is the Type 98 shortened Arisaka.

Shanghai, China, summer 1937: officers of the Naval Landing Forces observe operations in which these units were heavily involved. They are wearing the 1937 pattern uniform of this service in 'sea green', with an open collar over a shirt and tie. Rank is worn on the shoulder boards – the captain in the left foreground has three *sakura* blossoms, which replaced the Army's stars of rank. All wear field caps with the small gold anchor badge of their service. (Bill Tagg Collection)

H: BURMA, 1942

H1: Private 2nd Class, 214th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Division

As a member of the famous 'White Tigers' regiment this man displays the special badge of that unit above the yellow star of the Imperial Army on his field cap. Many units had specially designed badges, but few eyewitnesses bothered to record them officially. His tropical cotton tunic and trousers are with a collarless shirt, woollen puttees and black canvas *tabi* boots. A member of a two-man rifle grenade team, he has a Type 91 launcher on the muzzle of his Arisaka. Four different types of grenade could be fired from various models of the rifle, and each needed its own particular launcher: the Types 91, 2, 3 and 100, the Type 2 being available as an anti-tank round as well as a conventional grenade. The second man of the team for the Type 91 carried spare grenades in special five-round canvas pouches.

H2: Corporal, 55th Infantry Division

This figure, wearing tropical shirt and trousers with a netted helmet, shows the rear of the equipment worn by H1 – what the average Japanese infantryman had to carry on the march, although as much as possible would be dropped before he went into action. His knapsack is the later canvas type. Slung on his left side is the gas respirator bag, and behind his right hip the canvas haversack and a water bottle. Fastened to the left of his pack is an entrenching tool, with the handle removed, in a fabric cover. Also fastened by cloth ties to the knapsack is his metal mess tin; below this can be seen his third ammunition pouch, with a rifle cleaning kit in a pocket attached to the side.

H3: Lieutenant, 18th Infantry Division

This young officer, about to lead his platoon or company into the attack in Burma, is wearing the full tropical battle dress of an infantry officer. He has the later model cork sun helmet over his field cap, which has the sun flaps attached. His rank bar is attached to the right breast of his tropical shirt. His tropical breeches are confined by leather leggings above officers' shoes. Besides his Type 14 pistol he is armed with a privately owned *shin-gunto* sword. Officers sometimes carried blades which had been passed down to them through generations of their families, mounted with new furniture for modern battlefield use (the original fittings were often of precious materials and workmanship).

Burma, spring 1942: a cyclist wearing shirtsleeve uniform crosses an improvised log bridge over a river, carrying his 'mount' on his back: cf Plate G3. His cork sun helmet is of the second pattern. Notice the personal gear strapped to his bicycle, and the leaves he has fastened to the handlebars for camouflage. Captured civilian bicycles were used whenever they fell into the hands of the Japanese, who were always short of transport. (Robert Hunt Library)

INDEX

Figures in **bold** refer to illustrations

American forces 18, 20. *see also* United States of America
ammunition 39, 40
armbands **7**, **22**, 33, **35**, **43**
armies 8
artillery **C1**, 9, 10, 36, 42, **42**, 44, **44**

badges **H1**, 24, 33, 47
Banzai **D1**, **14**, 45
bicycles **16**, **47**
body armour **12**
branch of service colours 23, 23-24
British and Commonwealth forces 15, 16, 17
Burma, invasion of, 1941 15, 17, 21(table), **47**

camouflage 38
Caroline islands 3, 20
casualties 7, 14
  civilian 13
cavalry **A2**, **4**, 8, 11, 36, 43, **46**
Central China Front (Area) Army 15(table)
Chang Hsueh-liang 4
Chiang Tso-lin 3-4
chemical warfare, protective clothing 38
Chiang Kai-shek 4
China 3, 4, 7
chronology 11-14, 16
  invasion of Burma 17
  invasion of the Dutch East Indies 18
  invasion of Malaya 16-17
  invasion of the Philippines 17-18
civilians 5
  treatment of 7, 13
confidence 19
conscription 5-6
contradictions within 4-5
Coral Sea, battle of the, 1942 20

discipline 6, **19**
Dutch East Indies, invasion of, 1942 **F3**, 14-15, 15-16, 18, 21(table), 46

emperor, the 5, 8
equipment **A3**, **H2**, **3**, 39, 43, 47

footwear **G3**, 22, **24**, **35**, 35-36, 38, 46

Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, the 4

headgear **17**, 21
  caps **C3**, **3**, **22**, 33, 33-34, **35**, 44
  cold weather **B3**, **33**, 37, **38**, 43
  steel helmets **A1**, **A3**, **C1**, **D1**, 8, **10**, **12**, **14**, 34-35, **36**, **38**, 43, 44, **44**, 45
  sun helmets **C2**, **H3**, **16**, **18**, **23**, **24**, 35, 44, 47, **47**
  tank crew 38, **39**
Hong Kong 15
horses 9, 10

infantry divisions 19-20
  conscripts 8
  designations 8
  Imperial Guard 33
  supporting units 8-9
  Type A 'strengthened' 9, 9-10, 11
  Type B 8, 9, 10
  Type C 'special' 9, 10
infantry regiments 10

Japan 3, 4-5, 20
Japanese spirit 6-7

Korea 3
Kwangtung Army, the **B2**, 4, 11, 15(table), 43

logistics 29

Malaya, invasion of, 1941 **G3**, 11, 15, **16**, 16-17, **17**, 20, 21(table), 46
Manchukuo, Japanese puppet state 4
Manchuria 3-4, **8**, **12**, 21, **36**, **38**
Marco Polo Bridge Incident, the, 1937 12
medical corps, the 24
military police (*Kempei-tai*) **13**, 37
Mongol auxiliaries 11
motorcycles **13**
Mukden Incident, the, 1931 4, 11

Nanking, fall of, 1937 13
naval forces **D3**, **G1**, **13**, **20**, 35, 42, 45, 46, **47**
New Guinea 20
Nomonhan campaign, 1939 11, 13-14
non-commissioned officers **A3**, **E1**, **F1**, **H2**, 6, 23, 24, **24**, **35**, 37, **38**, 43, **43**, 45, 46, 47
  swords **F1**, **37**, 41, 46

officers 6, 7, **35**, **44**
  badges 24, 33
  capes 37
  cavalry **4**
  equipment 39
  footwear 36
  greatcoats **5**, 36
  headgear 33, **33**, 33-34, 35
  naval **47**
  raincoats 36-37
  swords **C**, 39, 41, 44
  tank crew **E2**, 45
  uniforms **B1-2**, **C**, **E2-3**, **H3**, **4**, **5**, **7**, **9**, **10**, **17**, 22-23 **33** 43,44, 45, **45**, 47, **47**
organisation
  cavalry 11
  High command 8
  infantry divisions 8-10
  infantry regiments 10
  Japanese terms 8(table)

Pacific campaign, 1941-42 7, 14-16, 21(table)
  chronology 16
paratroopers **F3**, 40, 46
Pearl Harbor, attack on, 1941 14
Philippines, invasion of the, 1941-42 15, 17-18, **20**, 21(table)
prisoners 7
propaganda, patriotic 5
'protective' tabards **6**

qualities 5
quality 19-20

ranks, insignia of **9**, 22, 23, **33**, **34**(table), 37, 41
reputation 19
reserve service 6
Russo-Japanese War, 1904-05 3, 21

self-sacrifice, cult of 7
Singapore **19**, 20
Sino-Japanese War, 1894 3
Sino-Japanese War, 1937-45 7
snipers 40
South China Front (Area) Army 15(table)
South Manchurian Railway incident, 1931 4, 11
Southern Resources Area, the 5
Soviet forces, threat of 7
standard bearers **D2**, **G1**, 45, 46
strength 7
  cavalry 11
  infantry divisions 9-10
  tank regiments 11
Sugiyama, General (1880-1945) **9**
swords **B1**, **C**, **H3**, **4**, **7**, **10**, **24**, **33**, 39, 41, 43, 44, **44**, 47
  non-commissioned officers **F1**, **37**, 41, 46

tactics and tactical doctrine 19
tanks 8, 9, 10, 11, **39**
traditions 4-5
training 6
transport 9, 10, **16**, **18**, 46, **47**

uniforms 21, **35**
  1930 (Type 90) **D1**, **3**, **4**, **10**, **14**, 21-22, 23, 33, 43
  1938 (Type 98) **9**, 21, 22, 23, **23**, **33**, **41**, **46**
  capes 37
  cavalry **46**
  coats 36-37, **38**
  cold weather **A1**, **B3**, **7**, 37-38, **38**, 43
  fatigue 38-39
  greatcoats **B1**, **B3**, **5**, **11**, 21, 36, **43**, 43
  naval forces **D3**, **G1**, **20**, 45, 46, **47**
  officers **B1-2**, **C**, **E2-3**, **H3**, **4**, **5**, **7**, **9**, **10**, **17**, 22-23, **33**, 43, 44, 45, **45**, 47, **47**
  tank crew **E2**, 38, **39**, **40**, 45
  transitional **C2**, 22, **22**, **37**, 44
  tropical **F2**, **G2-3**, **H1**, **H3**, **18**, **19**, 46, 47
unit insignia **H1**, 23, 47
United States of America 5, 14, 20-21. *see also* American forces

Washington Treaty (1922) 3
weapons 9, 10, 40
  grenades **H1**, **14**, 40, 47
  handguns **B1**, 40, 43
  machine guns **G2**, **13**, **14**, **36**, 42, **42**, 46
  mortars **F2**, 41, 46
  rifles **A1**, **11**, **14**, 40, **41**, 43
  sub-machine guns 40
  swords **B1**, **C**, **F1**, **H3**, **4**, **7**, **10**, **24**, **33**, **37**, 39, 41, 43, 44, **44**, 46, 47
World War I, 1914-18 3, 21

Yamashita Tomoyuki, General **17**

ESSENTIAL HISTORIES

Concise studies of the motives, methods and repercussions of human conflict, spanning history from ancient times to the present day. Each volume studies one major war or arena of war, providing an indispensable guide to the fighting itself, the people involved, and its lasting impact on the world around it.

CAMPAIGN

Accounts of history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics, movements and actions of the opposing forces throughout the crucial stages of each campaign. Full-colour battle scenes, 3-dimensional 'bird's-eye views', photographs and battle maps guide the reader through each engagement from its origins to its conclusion.

ORDER OF BATTLE

The greatest battles in history, featuring unit-by-unit examinations of the troops and their movements as well as analysis of the commanders' original objectives and actual achievements. Colour maps including a large fold-out base map, organisational diagrams and photographs help the reader to trace the course of the fighting in unprecedented detail.

ELITE

This series focuses on uniforms, equipment, insignia and unit histories in the same way as Men-at-Arms but in more extended treatments of larger subjects, also including personalities and techniques of warfare.

NEW VANGUARD

The design, development, operation and history of the machinery of warfare through the ages. Photographs, full-colour artwork and cutaway drawings support detailed examinations of the most significant mechanical innovations in the history of human conflict.

WARRIOR

Insights into the daily lives of history's fighting men and women, past and present, detailing their motivation, training, tactics, weaponry and experiences. Meticulously researched narrative and full-colour artwork, photographs, and scenes of battle and daily life provide detailed accounts of the experiences of combatants through the ages.

AIRCRAFT OF THE ACES

Portraits of the elite pilots of the 20th century's major air campaigns, including unique interviews with surviving aces. Unit listings, scale plans and full-colour artwork combine with the best archival photography available to provide a detailed insight into the experience of war in the air.

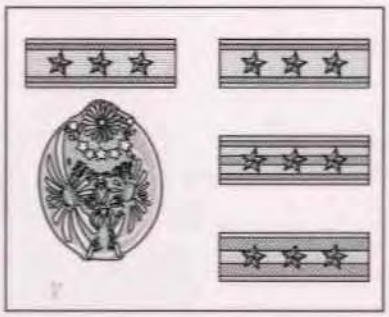
COMBAT AIRCRAFT

The world's greatest military aircraft and combat units and their crews, examined in detail. Each exploration of the leading technology, men and machines of aviation history is supported by unit listings and other data, artwork, scale plans, and archival photography.

Men-at-Arms • 362

The uniforms, equipment, history and organisation of the world's military forces, past and present.

Full colour artwork



Diagrams

Unrivalled detail

Photographs

The Japanese Army 1931–45

(1) 1931–42

During Japan's devastating Pacific offensive of 1941/42, the Allies paid a high price for their failure to take seriously an army which had already been fighting in Manchuria and China for ten years. That army was a unique blend of the ancient and the modern: its up-to-date equipment and resourceful tactics served an almost medieval code of unquestioning obedience and ruthless aggression. This first of two titles covers the organisation, equipment, uniforms and character of Japanese ground forces in the Chinese and early Pacific campaigns and is illustrated with an insignia chart, many rare photographs and eight meticulous uniform plates.

OSPREY PUBLISHING

www.ospreypublishing.com

ISBN 1-84176-353-5

9 781841 763538